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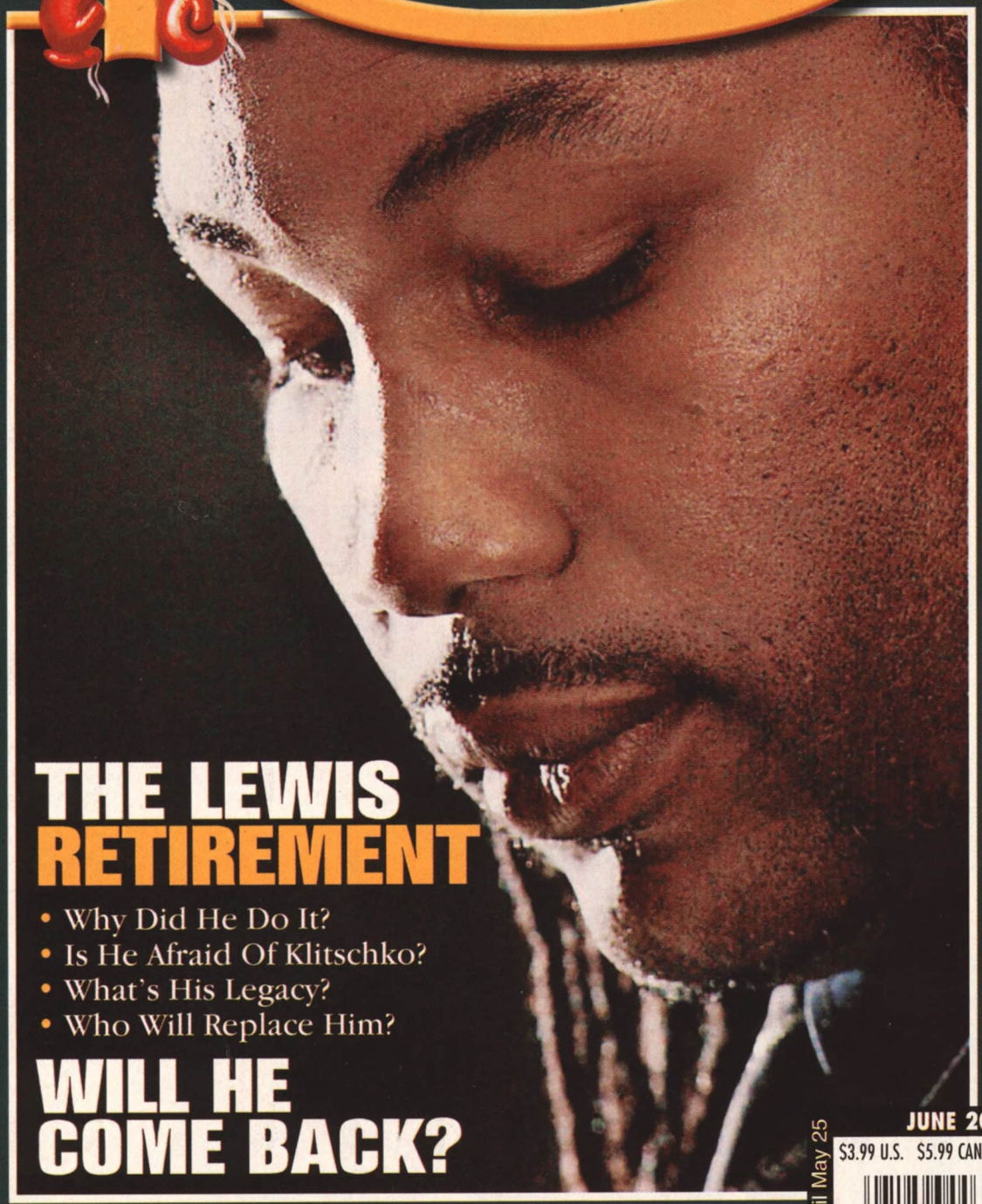

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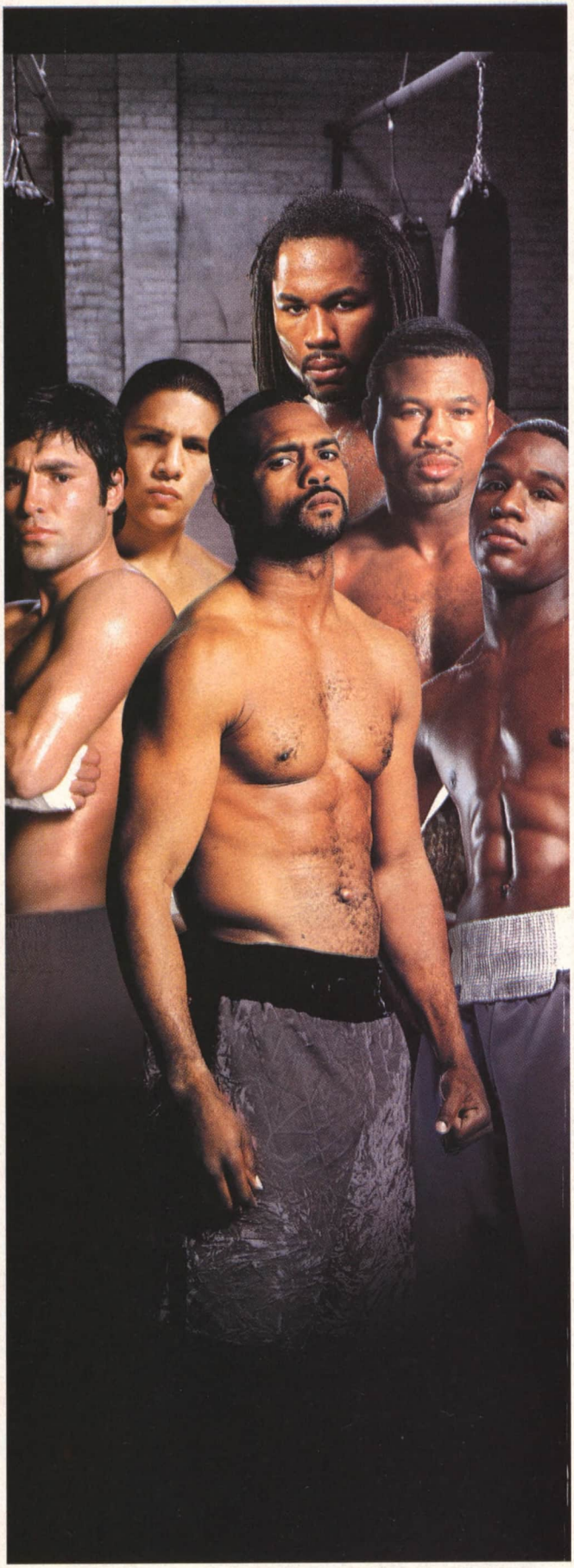

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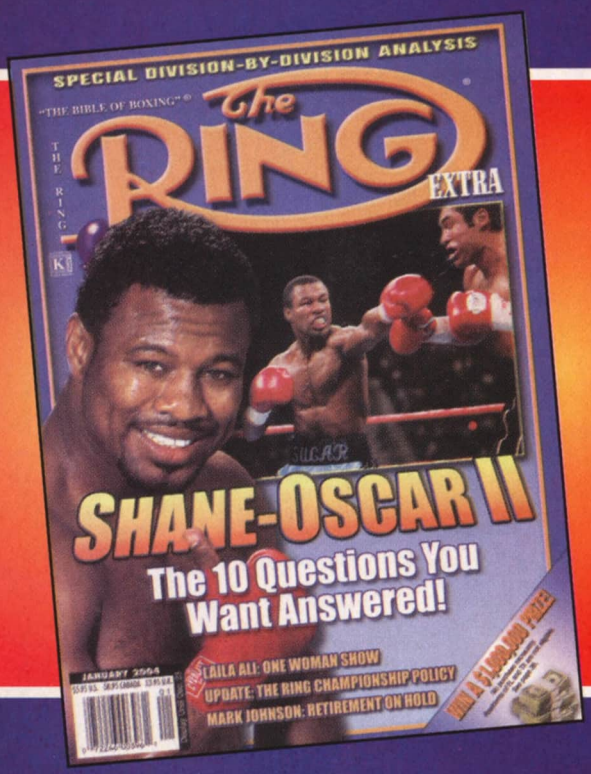

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RINGSIDE

Ever since Lennox Lewis retired, people have been asking where he ranks among the all-time heavyweight champions. Personally, I don't believe he belongs in the top 10, though he might very well deserve to be in the top 20.

Distance tends to give you a better perspective on most things, and Lewis' place in history will come into sharper focus as time passes. He's the kind of fighter who will probably be appreciated more in retrospect than he was during his career. This could very well happen in a relatively short period of time, especially if I'm right in guessing that there's no heavyweight out there right now capable of dominating the division the way Lewis has in recent years. There's nothing like the title being batted back and forth like a ping-pong ball to make fans miss a champion who brought stability to the division.

Lewis deserves our respect and gratitude. He's been a good champion, one who never ducked a challenger and defeated every major heavyweight of his era. He also brought credit to both the sport and himself by leading a dignified life outside of the ring. He was in some ways the anti-Tyson, a mellow counterbalance to the craziness that is Iron Mike.

Moreover, it's good to see a fighter get out with his health intact, which will be far more important in the long run than another fight with Vitali Klitschko, and not just for Lewis. The sport already has more than enough damaged heroes.

So where do we go from here?

You know the alphabet gangs will do their best to split the title in as many ways as possible, but THE RING has a better idea for filling this or any other vacancy: THE RING's championship policy. The criterion is spelled out on the ratings page of every issue—"… a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or in certain circumstances, between our number-one and number-three contenders."

Fortunately, it looks like that's going to happen relatively quickly, as negotiations are currently underway for a bout between Vitali Klitschko, THE RING's number-one contender, and Corrie Sanders, our number-three heavyweight. A match between Klitschko and Chris Byrd, our second-ranked contender, would also qualify, but right now it looks like Klitschko-Sanders.

In the words of Mills Lane: "Let's get it on!"

***

Boxing on ESPN took another hit in February when the all-sports network failed to come to terms with Max Kellerman, whose contract had expired. Thankfully, Max's studio cohort, Brian Kenny, will still be around for as long as *Friday Night Fights* survives, which might not be too much longer. But the show won't be anywhere near as much fun without Max.

When *FNF* debuted in 1998, Kellerman had an immediate impact on the sport with his outspoken personality and unbridled enthusiasm. His love of boxing was infectious and helped attract a younger demographic.

It soon became obvious that Max was also a crusader, as eager to expose corruption as he was to hype a good match. Together, he and Kenny did more to spread the gospel of THE RING's championship policy than any other members of the media. We couldn't have asked for stronger allies.

Word is that Max will soon resurface on another network, and we're sure that wherever his career takes him, he'll continue to be a large part of boxing.

Max, thanks for everything you did for boxing and THE RING during your tenure at ESPN. It was a great opening round. Keep punching.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 83, No. 7 **June 2004**

The RING

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BANQUET OF CHAMPIONS

Reminiscing . . . Livingstone Bramble and Lou Duva share fight stories with Banquet crowd.

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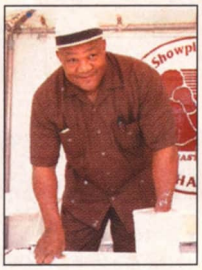
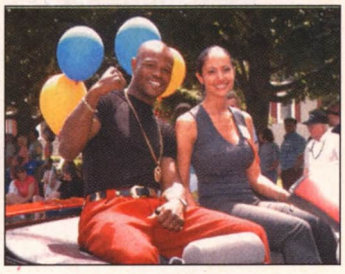


Everlasting . . . Fist cast by George Foreman.

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Marvelous . . . Marvin Hagler waves to fans.



Hooray . . . Terry Norris strikes a fight pose for the fans.

CELEBRITY BOXING NIGHT

ANGEL MANFREDY

Fight Night . . . Popular boxers featured in action-packed bouts at Turning Stone Casino Resort.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

Autographs . . . George Foreman spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

A Moment in Time . . . McCallum, Shulberg, Foreman, Locche, and Cokes proudly display their Hall of Fame rings.

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A Collector's Dream . . . Boxing memorabilia for fans. The world's only all-boxing show draws collectors from throughout the world.

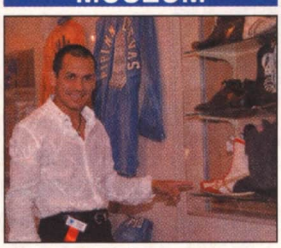
GOLF TOURNAMENT

Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

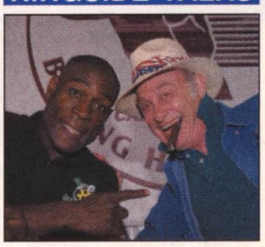


Ricardo Lopez points to his boxing shoes on display.

WORKOUT SESSIONS

Christy Martin laces up her gloves and Bernard Hopkins hits the speed bag.

RINGSIDE TALKS



Having Fun. . . Frank Bruno and Bert Sugar team up for a ringside lecture.

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ROUND ONE

MAYBE TITO ISN'T FINITO

His hair was a bit longer and he looked a few pounds over his fighting weight, but judging by the rapturous reception he received from the capacity crowd at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall, Felix Trinidad has lost none of his popularity since announcing his retirement in July 2002. The pride of Puerto Rico was in town to take in the sights at Don King's December 13 "Night Of The Undisputed" card, and no sooner was his presence known than the rumors of a comeback began to circulate anew.

Oscar De La Hoya, who lost controversially to Trinidad in '99, had made several overtures in an attempt to lure Tito out of retirement and back into the ring. But until Trinidad's appearance in Atlantic City, the comeback rumors had been relegated to the backburner. By the time 2004 dawned, they were rapidly rising to a boil.

As January drew to a close, the Trinidad camp made "The Golden Boy" an offer they must have known he would refuse—a $10.5-million purse plus a percentage of the pay-per-view sales.

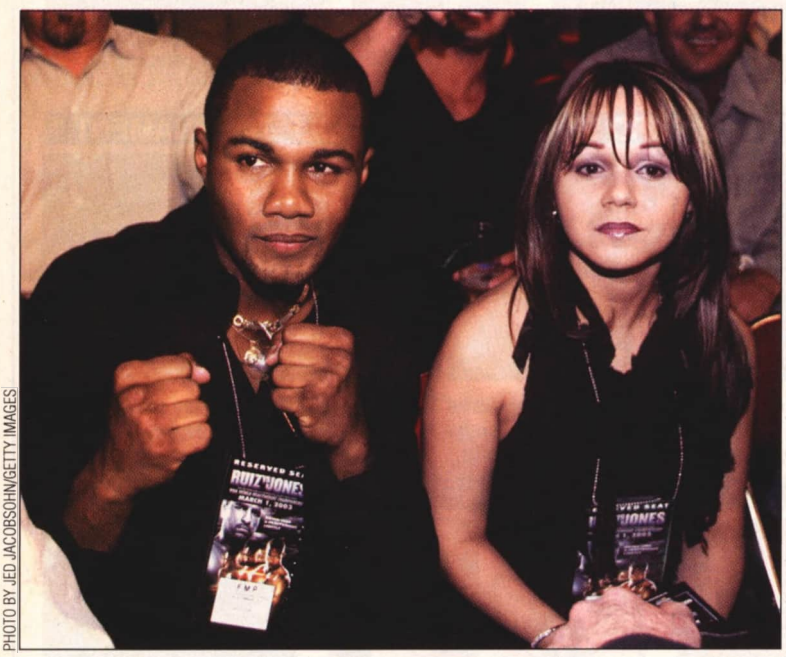


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Trinidad and his wife, ringside for the Roy Jones-John Ruiz fight in '03

De La Hoya called the offer "insulting" and responded by saying, "I'm the one in charge here. If they don't want to negotiate in good faith, I'll move on to the next guy."

The 31-year-old Trinidad was still playing it coy in early-February, when he told Sebastian Contursi of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, "I didn't say I'm back yet. I'm still evaluating the possibility. Who knows? It will depend on what offer comes up. If we can get a good deal, I'll be back. Otherwise, I'll stay retired."

While a De La Hoya rematch is clearly the biggest fight out there for Trinidad, it's not the only option. Tito also told Contursi that if he could have only one more fight, "I'd definitely choose [Bernard] Hopkins." If that's the case, Hopkins would be delighted to accommodate him, but so far there have been no negotiations with the middleweight champion. Instead, Team Trinidad was reportedly talking with representatives of Shane Mosley, who would also make an excellent match for Trinidad, providing he gets past Winky Wright, which was scheduled after our press date.

Talk of bouts with Mosley or Hopkins could very well be nothing more than negotiating ploys, with De La Hoya still Trinidad's number-one target. If Senior Vice President of HBO Sports Mark Taffet had his way, there's no doubt which match he'd prefer.

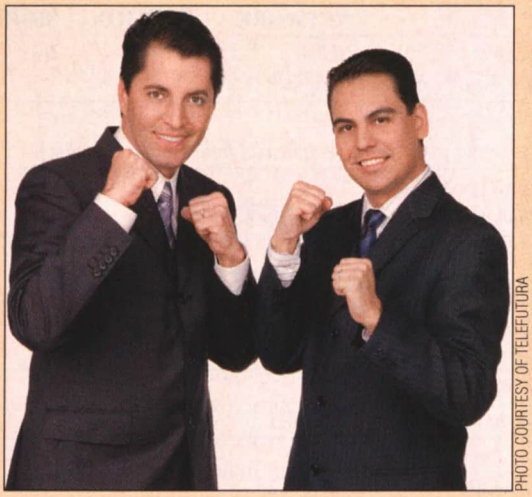
"De La Hoya-Trinidad II is a fight that would take on mythological proportions," said Taffet. "Their 1999 fight is still the biggest non-heavyweight fight in history, and it would probably be bigger if they have a rematch."

So as heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis fades into retirement, another of boxing's biggest stars ponders his return. The sport could surely use the boost a Trinidad comeback would provide, and the guess here is that Tito will have no difficulty finding the "good deal" he wants to make it official.

—Nigel Collins

A NETWORK THAT SUPPORTS ITS FRIDAY NIGHT FIGHTS

Because ESPN is no longer paying licensing fees to the promoters of its boxing shows, on the likelihood scale, *Friday Night Fights* surviving beyond 2004 ranks somewhere between John Ruiz getting into the Hall of Fame and Sven Ottke losing a decision in Germany. But just because *FNF* might soon be dead, that doesn't mean fights on Friday nights are. Since January 2002, the Spanish-language network Telefutura has brought us *Solo Boxeo*, and the overwhelmingly positive ratings trends indicate that a weekly boxing program can still succeed, regardless of what the suits at the network that calls itself "Your Boxing Authority" would have us believe.



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Solo Boxeo *commentators Ricardo Celis and Bernardo Osuna*

Solo Boxeo, which aired on parent station Univision on Sunday afternoons from August '00 to December '01 before switching to become a flagship program for the then-newly launched Telefutura, saw its consistently rising ratings skyrocket in the last quarter of '03. The number of viewers aged 18-49 watching the show at year's end was estimated to be 678,000, more than three times as many as when *Solo Boxeo* debuted two years earlier. This was due to both the fact that Fernando Vargas fought on the network on December 12 (garnering better ratings among Hispanics aged 18-49 than any of rival network Telemundo's prime-time programs that week), and, one would think, to the inconsistent schedule of the competition coming from ESPN2.

But according to the Univision research department, the demographic overlap between *FNF* and *Solo Boxeo* is not substantial. In other words, if *FNF* goes off the air, Telefutura doesn't expect to pick up too many of its viewers. But even if Telefutura *did* stand to gain greatly, *Solo Boxeo* broadcaster Bernardo Osuna still would not exactly be overjoyed about the potential demise of *FNF*.

"It is by no means a positive for us or for the sport," said Osuna, the 2003 Boxing Writers Association of America broadcaster of the year. "I'd hate to advance at the cost of anybody else. I think the best thing in broadcasting is competition. And honestly, I hope nothing does happen to *Friday Night Fights*, because the people who will be hurt are the fighters who lose that outlet. But, realistically, any time you take the money out of boxing, that's the end of the venture. Nobody does it for the love of art alone. When the news broke that they were cutting their licensing fees, we saw it as, *Wow, an institution is about to crumble.*"

Osuna admits, though, that *Solo Boxeo* could benefit from the fact that the fighters losing that outlet will be more eager to fight on Telefutura. That means more stars (although there weren't *that* many stars still fighting on *FNF*), higher ratings, and, presumably, a Friday night boxing program that isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

—Eric Raskin

DEALER NUNN DEALT 24 YEARS

He had been described as clean-cut, soft-spoken, and polite. He had some boxing observers thinking in the 1980s that he was the southpaw version of Sugar Ray Leonard. That's why it was so disheartening when the news hit that two-division former titlist Michael Nunn was sentenced to 292 months in prison on January 30 for buying approximately two pounds of cocaine from an undercover agent.

It spelled another sad demise of a once sterling fighter. The 40-year-old Nunn, 58-4 (38), had earned an estimated $6-million as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the late-'80s and early-'90s. He held the IBF middleweight title and then the WBA super middleweight belt, but his career began spiraling downward after he lost unexpectedly to Steve Little in '93.

He was repeatedly arrested for drug offenses in his hometown of Davenport, Iowa, culminating in the drug bust on August 6, 2002, when Nunn paid an undercover agent $200 for one kilogram of cocaine that had an estimated street value of $24,000. He pleaded guilty in May '03 to one count of conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

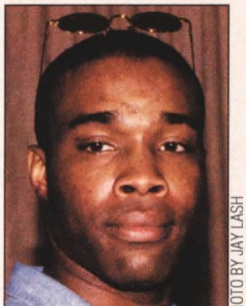


PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Nunn: Two dozen years in prison

"Boxing kept Nunn off the streets," said Dan Goossen, who promoted Nunn through most of his career. "It gave him discipline, it made him lots of money. Cars, jewelry, homes, all have a high price. Once you have it, it's hard to live any other way. It's a very toxic potion."

Nunn fought as recently as January '02, when he decisioned journeyman Vinson Durham, in Bridgeport, Indiana.

—Joe Santoliquito

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
1-15-04	Ishe Smith W 12 Randall Bailey	Show	w	B-	B+	C
If Bailey ever learns to throw a combination, he'll be a heck of a fighter						
1-16-04	Daniel Ponce-DeLeon KO 1 Jesus Perez	Telef	b	C	B-	B
DeLeon a pure puncher if we've ever seen one; we don't know yet if he can fight, but he can punch						
1-16-04	Fernando Montiel KO 3 Roberto Lopez	Telef	jb	B	D+	C+
Montiel shows you don't need to be a big puncher to stop someone to the body						
1-16-04	Koba Gogaladze KO 2 Juan Garza	ESPN2	jl	C	B+	B
Remember, kids: A straight punch beats a looping one every time						
1-16-04	Matt Vanda W 10 Sam Garr	ESPN2	jm	C	B+	C+
Judges Jack Hayden and Butch Anderson should never be allowed near a pencil again						
1-23-04	Martin Castillo W 12 Rogelio Galicia	Telef	jb	B-	C+	C+
Excellent performance by Castillo; a shame he cuts as easily as he does						
1-23-04	Peter Manfredo KO 6 Sherwin Davis	ESPN2	jm	C	B	B-
Manfredo as good as advertised; the kid can fight						
1-23-04	Scott Pemberton KO 10 Omar Sheika	ESPN2	sm	B-	A	A-
The poor man's Gatti-Ward marred by stoppage that came about a round later than it should have						
1-24-04	Francisco Bojado W 12 Emmanuel Clottey	HBO	w	B-	B	C+
Who would have thought that at this point it would be Bojado's speed and skills getting him wins?						
1-24-04	Arturo Gatti W 12 Gianluca Branco	HBO	jw	B+	C+	B-
Yes, we love Arturo too, but if you think he's a champion again, you're part of the problem						
1-29-04	Sam Reese W 8 Aneudi Santos	HBO L	lh	C-	B+	B+
Don't you love it when a guy who's barely above .500 knocks off an undefeated kid?						
1-29-04	Shamir Reyes W 10 Ivan Valle	HBO L	jl	C+	B	B+
Reyes smarter, stronger, better down the stretch; good fight all around						
1-30-04	Arturo Morua W 12 Juan Antonio Lopez	Telem	jw	C+	B+	B-
One more round, another overhand right or two, and Lopez might have pulled it out						
1-31-04	**Rafael Marquez KO 2 Peter Frissina**	**HBO**	**IBF b**	**A-**	**D-**	**C**
Note to referee Caiz: Frissina's the white guy; you don't have to give him the count in Spanish						
1-31-04	Antonio Margarito KO 2 Hercules Kyvelos	HBO	w	B+	C-	D+
The last time we saw a fighter freeze like this, his name was Bruce Seldon						
2-6-04	Epifanio Mendoza KO 8 Rito Ruvalcaba	Telem	m	C+	B-	B
When will guys learn to stop accepting Mendoza as a last-minute sub?						
2-6-04	Henry Bruseles KO 7 Wilfredo Negron	Telef	jw	C+	B	B+
Bruseles gets off canvas to bang out Negron in a wild shootout						
2-6-04	Daniel Jimenez KO 7 Alberto DeJesus Trinidad	Telef	jl	C+	B-	A-
Another scorcher; hey ESPN2: This is how it looks when you care about the fans						
2-6-04	Paul Williams KO 4 Rodolfo Gomez	ESPN2	jm	C	C-	C+
Words to live by: When you hit a guy on the head 117 times in a row and he doesn't move, go to the body						
2-6-04	Raymond Joval Tech. Win 8 Angel Hernandez	ESPN2	m	B-	B	B
Poor Hernandez under-powered for his style in a rare good main event for FNF						
2-7-04	Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Lovemore Ndou	Show	jw	A-	C+	B
We've got bad news for you, Sharmba: Ndou doesn't hit as hard as Tszyu does						

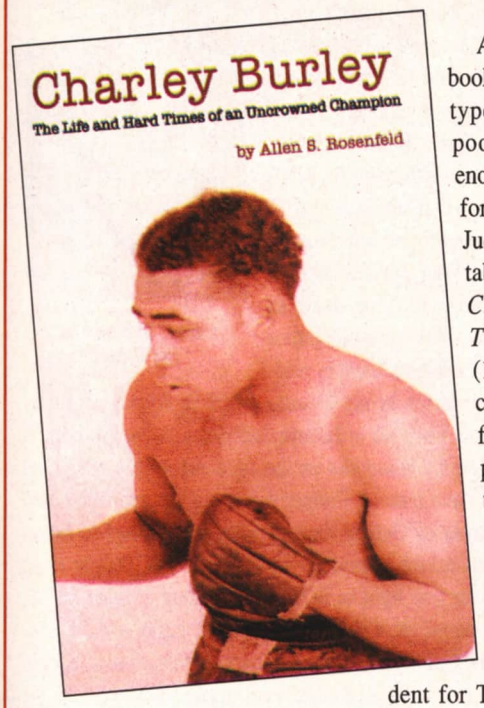
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



As a general rule, self-published books are rife with spelling, punctuation, typographical, and stylistic blunders, poor font selection, bad photos, and enough other defects to make you weep for the trees that died to give them life. Judging by the sheer bulk of it, a veritable forest bit the dust to bring forth *Charley Burley: The Life And Hard Times Of An Uncrowned Champion* (1st Books Library, 659 pages, softcover, $17.50), and while it suffers from many of the aforementioned problems, it more than makes up for them by putting a long overdue and illuminating spotlight on a boxer who has become the poster boy for great fighters who never got to challenge for a world championship.

A onetime Michigan correspondent for THE RING, Allen S. Rosenfeld spent five years scrolling through microfilmed newspapers, old magazines, and books, watching videos, and listening to audiotapes to put together this burly bio of the Pittsburgh boxer who, most experts agree, was one of the top middleweights of his (1936-'50) and any era. The accuracy of this assessment is amply demonstrated throughout Mr. Rosenfeld's chronological, fight-by-fight look at Burley's career. Readers with short attention spans might say that the author went way overboard in presenting verbatim so many contemporary sportswriters' lengthy previews, reports, and postmortems on each Burley encounter, but reading them is enlightening and half the fun. So is following Mr. Rosenfeld down the various side roads, cul-de-sacs, detours, and sudden flights of fancy he takes to address the careers of other forgotten great 1940s ringmen such as Cocoa Kid, Eddie Booker, Holman Williams, Lloyd Marshall, Doc Williams, and Bert Lytell.

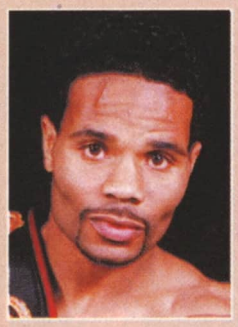
Among many other things, he reminds us how great a fighter Ezzard Charles really was, to have defeated the veteran Burley a week or so before Charles even graduated from high school.

A publishing house editor would have worn out a brace of meat-axes hewing away the extraneous material, the long audio transcripts, the reams of quoted material, the digressions to lay out the plots of the author's favorite boxing books, the personal asides ("Other fight news on April 19, 1942: Promoter Mike Jacobs had built a swimming pool at his home in Rumson, New Jersey … but wasn't using it because he suffered sinus trouble. This writer has spent a lot of time in Rumson, and would have advised Jacobs to just take walks on the beach"), and the otherwise not really necessary. But confusing as it sometimes gets, they're all part of the charm and warmth exuded by this everything-including-the-kitchen-sink homage to fighters and an era whose like will never come again, written in a vintage courtly style that sometimes lays it on a little thick, e.g., "At this writing a young intellectual named Max Kellerman is very hot as the boxing commentator for ESPN2."

Charley Burley: The Life And Hard Times Of An Uncrowned Champion is available at www.1stbooks.com. An electronic book version costs $6.95.

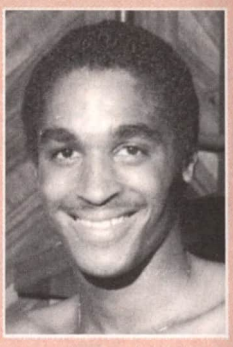
—Pete Ehrmann

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Joppy: Charged with assault

In a major downer for the fans, twin injuries spoiled possibly the most eagerly anticipated show of 2004's first quarter. First, junior welterweight champion **Kostya Tszyu** suffered a ruptured tendon in his left shoulder while training in mid-January for his rematch with **Sharmba Mitchell**, and less than two weeks later, **James Toney**, who was set to fight **Jameel McCline** on the same Showtime broadcast, ruptured his left Achilles tendon in training. Both veteran fighters underwent surgery, and the doctors are projecting a summer return to the ring for Toney and a fall return for Tszyu … Former middleweight titlist **William Joppy** was arrested in early-January on charges of assaulting a repo man outside the Round One Gym in Capitol Heights, Maryland, last November. According to the attorneys of **James Ware**, an adjuster for an auto repossession company, Ware was peering into Joppy's car when the fighter punched him twice, breaking his jaw. Ware has filed a $5-million civil suit … Unbeaten (at least officially) Minnesota junior middleweight **Matt Vanda** was arrested in early-February, along with his roommate, after police claim to have found small amounts of methamphetamine and hallucinogenic mushrooms, plus $12,000 in cash and a gun at their home. The two men were released two days later pending further investigation … Heavyweight brothers **Vitali** and **Wladimir Klitschko** filed papers in a Hamburg, Germany, court in late-January in hopes of terminating their contract with Universum-Box Promotions. The case was expected to go to court in the spring … Junior middle champ **Shane Mosley** sued former promoter **Cedric Kushner** in late-January for in excess of $600,000, money he alleges he is owed from his July '02 rematch with **Vernon Forrest** … Two former 105-pound beltholders announced their retirements in mid-January: First, Indonesian **Nico Thomas**, who held the IBF mini flyweight title for three months in 1989, hung up the gloves at age 37; and two days later, Filipino **Joma Gamboa**, who enjoyed a 3½-month reign as WBA titlist in 2000, called it quits at age 30 shortly after a second-round kayo loss to WBC 108-pound king **Jorge Arce** … Unfortunately, we have a ring death to report this month, as 20-year-old junior flyweight **Antonius Moses** died in mid-January, six days after being knocked out in round eight by Thailander **Kaichon Vorapin** in Jakarta, Indonesia. Moses, reportedly 14-1-1 (9), suffered a blood clot on the right side of his brain, and surgery could not save him … Former lightweight contender **Alvin "Too Sweet" Hayes** of Detroit died of what is believed to be an intentional drug overdose in mid-January. Hayes, 44, fought from '81-'86, returned for one fight in '93, and then fought twice in '03, finishing with a record of 30-3 (26) … Former junior welter contender **Scott "Pink Cat" Walker** died in early-February at age 34 in his home in Mesa, Arizona, of undisclosed causes. Walker's 25-7-1 (13) record included a win over a 42-year-old **Alexis Arguello** … Former flyweight contender **Danny "Bazooka" Nunez**, living in extreme poverty in New York, died due to the cold weather in mid-January at age 34. The Dominican went 27-3 (19) in a six-year career that ended in '94 with an unsuccessful challenge of then-WBA fly titlist **Saen Sor Ploenchit** … **Harold Weston Sr.**, the trainer of his son, 1970s welterweight contender **Harold Weston Jr.**, died in mid-January at age 84 … Veteran referee and judge **Hank Elesperu** of Sacramento, California, died of cancer in mid-January at age 80.



Hayes: Sad end for "Too Sweet"

THE PUNCHLINES

"This isn't about ratings or sponsors. It's about ESPN wanting to get something for free and wanting other people to do their work for them. They don't want to pay for anything."

—Promoter Dan Goossen, on the new *Friday Night Fights* financial setup

"Arturo might put 12,000 butts in the seats if *I* was the opponent."

—HBO Sports Vice President of Programming Xavier James, after Gatti vs. Gianluca Branco drew 11,237 fans

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Heavyweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
3. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Junior Middleweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
6. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Featherweight
7. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
9. **JAMES TONEY**
   Heavyweight
10. **ANTONIO TARVER**
    Light Heavyweight

(For period ended February 11, 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: The championship is now vacant due to Lennox Lewis' retirement. There are no changes among the top 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Carl Thompson returns at number seven thanks to his kayo of Sebastian Rothman, who falls from seventh to eighth. Thompson's reinstatement also pushes down Virgil Hill from eighth to ninth and Dale Brown from ninth to 10th, while Pietro Aurino (10th last issue) exits.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Zsolt Erdei debuts at number two following his decision over Julio Gonzalez, who slips from second to fourth. Glencoffe Johnson advances from fourth to third on the strength of his victory over Clinton Woods, who slides from sixth to seventh. The shakeup also lowers Dariusz Michalczewski from third to fifth. Everybody below also drops one spot each, while Mehdi Sahnoune (10th last issue) departs.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Antonio Margarito (third last issue) switches places with relatively inactive Vernon Forrest (second last issue). Andrew Lewis (seventh last issue) is gone because he has not fought in more than a year. This allows Teddy Reid (eighth last issue), Jawaid Khaliq (ninth last issue), and Jose Rivera (10th last issue) to climb one rung each. Carlos Baldomir is new at number 10.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Lovemore Ndou crashes the rankings at number eight as a result of his strong showing against Sharmba Mitchell, who hangs on to his number-one position. Omar Weis (ninth last issue) exits because of inactivity. Miguel Cotto falls from eighth to ninth to accommodate Ndou's entry.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Leonard Dorin (third last issue) has moved up to junior welter, where he is tentatively scheduled to fight Arturo Gatti. Dorin's ranking at 140 will be determined following the Gatti fight. Dorin's removal allows everybody rated below him last issue to move up one spot each, and also makes room for Alex Trujillo at number 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Cassius Baloyi (eighth last issue) departs due to inactivity. This bumps up Jorge Barrios from ninth to eighth and Orlando Salido from 10th to ninth. Filling the void at number 10 is Mike Anchondo.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Pete Frissina (seventh last issue) is gone following his kayo loss to number-one ranked Rafael Marquez. Frissina's exit allows Genaro Garcia (eighth last issue), Silence Mabuza (ninth last issue), and Heriberto Ruiz (10th last issue) to move ahead one position each. Ricardo Vargas is back at number 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Following a narrow, upset win over Chana Porpaoin, Juan Landaeta enters at number six, bumping Porpaoin down from six to seven. Everyone ranked below drops one spot to accommodate Landaeta's arrival, and Edgar Cardenas (10th last issue) falls out.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended February 11, 2004

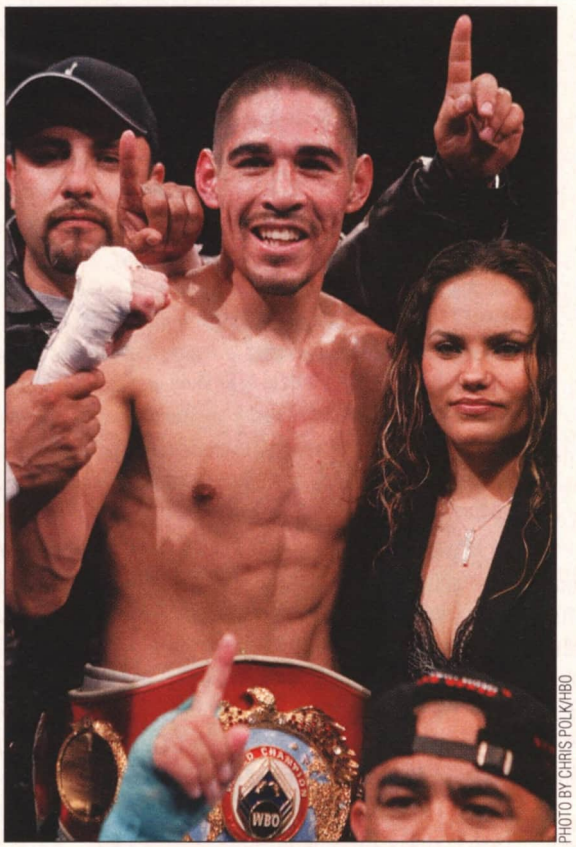


PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK/HBO

Antonio Margarito advanced one spot at welterweight after vanquishing Hercules Kyvelos

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 33-2 (32)
2. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI 37-2 (20)
3. **CORRIE SANDERS** South Africa 39-2 (29)
4. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL 49-1 (38)
5. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
6. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand 42-3-1 (37)
7. **JOHN RUIZ** Methuen, MA 39-5-1 (27)
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 42-2 (39)
9. **FRES OQUENDO** Puerto Rico 24-2 (15)
10. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY 50-4 (44)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: SHANE MOSLEY Pomona, CA 39-2 (35)

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 36-3 (29)
2. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL 46-3 (25)
3. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 24-2 (22)
4. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 19-1-1 (13)
5. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO** Spain 56-5 (38)
6. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 27-2-1 (20)
7. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 36-9-1 (18)
8. **TRAVIS SIMMS** Norwalk, CT 23-0 (18)
9. **J.C. CANDELO** Colombia 27-6-3 (19)
10. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO Philippines 38-2-1 (29)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 42-2 (33)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico 57-4 (40)
3. **SCOTT HARRISON** Scotland 20-2-1 (10)
4. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico 62-14 (28)
5. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM 53-3-2 (28)
6. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL 39-6-1 (24)
7. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 27-2-1 (16)
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England 35-1-1 (23)
9. **WILLIAM ABELYAN** Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
10. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 19-0 (14)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA Ft. Worth, TX 35-2 (12)

1. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 50-3-1 (35)
2. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR** France 24-2-2 (15)
3. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA** Venezuela 23-2-1 (13)
4. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico 35-3 (26)
5. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE** France 42-4-1 (21)
6. **JOAN GUZMAN** Dominican Republic 20-0 (16)
7. **OSAMU SATO** Japan 27-2-3 (16)
8. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG** Thailand 35-1-1 (19)
9. **NEDAL HUSSEIN** Australia 31-1 (18)
10. **JORGE LACIERVA** Mexico 24-5-4 (16)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 31-3 (28)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 41-1-2 (29)
3. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH 25-1-1 (22)
4. **CRUZ CARBAJAL** Mexico 24-11-1 (20)
5. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark 54-2 (26)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** Japan 23-3-3 (14)
7. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 30-4 (18)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 15-0 (14)
9. **HERIBERTO RUIZ** Mexico 28-2-2 (13)
10. **RICARDO VARGAS** Mexico 36-9-3 (11)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 33-1 (29)
2. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 20-0 (17)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 29-2 (21)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 43-12-2 (28)
5. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 22-1-1 (21)
6. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 26-5 (24)
7. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 32-6 (24)
8. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN**
   South Africa 17-2-2 (12)
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 49-4 (23)
10. **DALE BROWN**
    Canada 30-3-1 (20)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 49-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 21-2 (17)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 19-0 (13)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 40-9-2 (27)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 35-1 (22)
5. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
6. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-3-1 (7)
7. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-3-1 (21)
8. **SILVIO BRANCO**
   Italy 49-6-2 (30)
9. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 44-4 (29)
10. **RICHARD HALL**
    Winter Haven, FL 27-4 (25)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 36-0 (29)
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 33-0 (6)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 20-1 (15)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-5-1 (26)
5. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 17-1 (17)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 28-1 (11)
8. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
9. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
10. **ROBIN REID**
    England 36-4-1 (27)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 43-2-1 (31)

1. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 39-1 (35)
2. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 36-4 (27)
3. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 31-3 (20)
4. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-3-1 (25)
5. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 19-4 (13)
6. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AK 19-0 (14)
7. **EVANS OURE ASHIRA**
   Denmark 23-0 (13)
8. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 20-0 (9)
9. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 18-1 (10)
10. **RAYMOND JOVAL**
    Netherlands 32-2 (14)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CORY SPINKS
St. Louis, MO 32-2 (11)

1. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Nicaragua 25-4-1 (22)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 30-3 (21)
3. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 33-0 (26)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 40-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 25-10 (18)
7. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
8. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 22-1-1 (13)
9. **JOSE RIVERA**
   Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)
10. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
    Argentina 39-9-6 (11)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 53-3 (30)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 30-1 (22)
3. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 37-6 (28)
4. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 23-1-1 (16)
5. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 34-0 (25)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-2-1 (16)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 34-1 (10)
8. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
   Australia 36-6-1 (22)
9. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 18-0 (15)
10. **JUNIOR WITTER**
    England 27-1-2 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 31-0 (21)

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-2-1 (25)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 48-6-1 (44)
3. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
4. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 35-0 (31)
5. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 47-10-2 (34)
6. **COURTNEY BURTON**
   Benton Harbor, MI 20-1 (11)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-1 (22)
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
9. **VICTORIANO SOSA**
   Dominican Republic 36-3-2 (26)
10. **ALEX TRUJILLO**
    Puerto Rico 23-1 (17)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 30-1 (19)
2. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-2 (28)
3. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-3-1 (24)
4. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 45-1 (34)
5. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 37-2 (31)
6. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-2 (6)
7. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 40-2-1 (33)
8. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 40-2-1 (29)
9. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 19-8-1 (12)
10. **MIKE ANCHONDO**
    Los Angeles, CA 23-0 (18)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 30-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 25-0 (24)
3. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 42-3 (27)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 22-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 27-1-1 (21)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 25-1 (15)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-5-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 30-4-1 (20)
9. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 38-0 (28)
10. **JOSE NAVARRO**
    Los Angeles, CA 19-0 (7)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 50-2 (26)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 22-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 28-0 (21)
4. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 33-1 (18)
5. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 14-1-2 (10)
7. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 23-1-1 (12)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 15-0-2 (9)
9. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Australia 20-0 (15)
10. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
    France 14-0 (6)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-2 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 35-3-1 (26)
2. **BEIBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 29-2 (23)
3. **VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 36-13-3 (21)
4. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 28-2 (13)
5. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
6. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-9-4 (30)
7. **MHIKIZA MYEKENI**
   South Africa 17-1 (6)
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-2 (21)
9. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 25-3 (14)
10. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
    Thailand 50-3-2 (20)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
2. **EAGLE AKAKURA**
   Japan 12-0 (5)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 33-1-1 (28)
4. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 30-2-1 (19)
5. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
   Japan 15-1-3 (8)
6. **JUAN LANDAETA**
   Venezuela 15-2 (13)
7. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 50-2-2 (17)
8. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 23-10 (6)
9. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 22-2-1 (19)
10. **IVAN CALDERON**
    Puerto Rico 18-0 (3)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

BODY OF EVI-DENTS

Easily forgotten as we're watching our heroes shake off would-be tacklers, soar above the rim, slide headfirst into third base, or swap haymakers in ring center is that athletes ask an awful lot more of their bodies during the course of a pro career than they have a right to ask. The human elbow, after all, wasn't made to snap off a curveball, the knee wasn't constructed to land awkwardly on artificial turf, and nature didn't create the human head expecting that it would be snapped back violently by jabs and uppercuts.

Records are made to be broken, all right, but so are the bodies of the folks in the jockstraps and sports bras.

Still, the announcement that Kostya Tszyu had to call off his February rematch with Sharmba Mitchell because Tszyu's anatomy had betrayed him yet again felt like a left hook to the gut. *My* gut. Granted, anyone who has spent two decades covering a sport as unpredictable as boxing—which means watching dream matchups dissolve on the drawing board, seeing future greats head off to prison in their primes, witnessing the destructive power of drugs, and even experiencing the horror of combatants dying—shouldn't get his hopes up for anything. But the Mitchell sequel was supposed to have been Tszyu's first outing in 13 long months. How could anyone who loves action not look forward to it with great anticipation?

There's something about this Tszyu character that has made him one of my two or three favorite active fighters. It's no secret what that is. It's electrifying power and a pressure attack combined with enough defensive shortcomings to make things interesting even against outclassed foes. (Remember the anxious moments against Oktay Urkal in Uncasville? Now, try saying that three times fast.) The problem is that Tszyu is like a three-ring circus that thrills and amazes, but only goes on tour once in a great while.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

The Judah knockout was supposed to launch Tszyu to superstardom

With bombers like Lennox Lewis, Mike Tyson, and David Tua hibernating for long stretches of time, and Oscar De La Hoya and Bernard Hopkins forgetting how to knock people out, we could use a Tszyu right about now to remind us

that a well-placed crunch punch can be prettier than Charlize Theron in a field of lilacs.

This time, it was the shoulder that gave out during training. The partially ruptured tendon was surgically repaired, and doctors said they expect Tszyu to make a complete recovery and regain a full range of motion in the shoulder. But the Russian ramrod will be out of action until at least July, and one has to wonder if the damaged wing of someone who fires thousands of hard punches during training, and hundreds more in a fight, could ever be 100 percent after meeting up with the scalpel.

The Mitchell sequel had originally been scheduled for last September, but was postponed when Tszyu injured his Achilles tendon. Wracking my brain the other day to think of which fighter Tszyu most reminds me of, the conclusion reached was that he doesn't remind me of any fighter. He instead conjures images of two football players: Joe Namath and Gale Sayers. Both were incredible talents whose brief moments of brilliance were followed by a string of frustrating injuries that eventually cut short their careers. Namath and Sayers are Hall of Famers *and* underachievers, as bizarre as that sounds.

Is Tszyu destined to go the way of Namath?

Sayers had the potential to be the greatest running back who ever played and once scored an amazing six touchdowns in a game. In 1968, his knee ligaments were shredded for the first time, and that began a steady spiral toward premature retirement. When his career was done, Sayers had played in just 68 games.

Namath passed for more than 4,000 yards in his third season and was the MVP of the Super Bowl in his fourth. Then the injuries came in waves. Broken wrist. Torn knee ligaments. Separated shoulder. "Broadway Joe" never came close to another world championship and as a result of missing so much action (19 straight games over two seasons during one stretch), he didn't even make it to Canton, Ohio, until his third year on the ballot.

One has to wonder if Tszyu is destined for the same kind of gradual fadeout. *His* Super Bowl was the second-round knockout of Zab Judah to unify the junior welterweight title in November 2001. It was a truly magnificent night for Tszyu. As a Russian singer in ring center warbled a tune written specifically for him, he walked to the ring mouthing the lyric, "I'm as hard as rock inside, and I'm gonna knock you out tonight!" Though wobbled in the first round, he hung tough and launched a right-hand cruise missile in the second that didn't just knock Judah onto Queer Street, but through the pavement and into the Queer Street subway station.

That was 2½ years ago. Tszyu has fought just twice since, not looking all that impressive while being extended the distance by Ben Tackie and stopping Jesse James Leija. If someone hadn't seen the kayo of Judah with their own eyes, and they'd looked at Tszyu's career path since then, they'd swear the Russian had *lost* that unification showdown.

Do you want to know what the boxing equivalent is of Sayers playing in only 68 games in seven seasons? It's Tszyu's 32 bouts in 12 years as a pro, an average of 2.67 per year. Tszyu is 34 years old, his body is breaking down too often, and it's looking more and more like he's either going to be upset, suffer a career-ending injury, or be too far past his peak before he gets a chance to fight some of the names we want him to face: De La Hoya, Floyd Mayweather, Ricky Hatton. Could you imagine Tszyu vs. Arturo Gatti? What would we give to see Tszyu's best right hand and Gatti's finest left hook land simultaneously? *Yeow!*

In the 2003 edition of *The Ring Yearbook*, Tszyu was named the 67th best puncher of all-time. With all due respect to the selection committee, he deserved to be rated higher. He's one of the best home run hitters of the past decade and a guy who appeared, on the night he sent Judah to the canvas, to be on the verge of superstardom.

The human body is a complex machine, we have to keep reminding ourselves. Perhaps we should have realized that a fighter who battles with such fury and force was destined to have a prime that lasted about as long as the XFL. It's cruel, though, isn't it, that Tszyu's setbacks came after his finest moment? We were teased by what he might have had to offer, we got our hopes up, and … ouch!

Fortunes can change in a hurry in boxing. The same package that arrived on the doorstep in Canastota marked with a skull and crossbones one night in 2001 is these days labeled, "FRAGILE. HANDLE WITH CARE." ■

CAMERA CLICKS

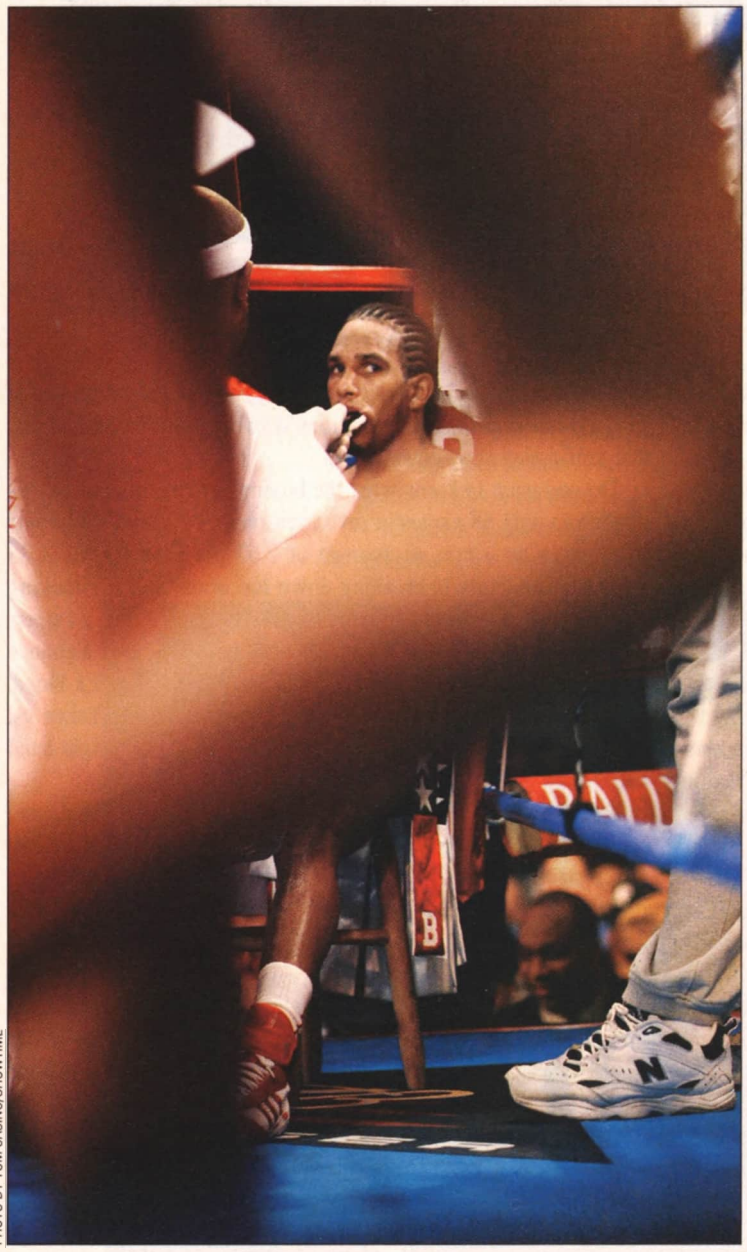


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

If you're wondering why Sharmba Mitchell struggled so much against Lovemore Ndou, this photo suggests that a lack of focus might have had something to do with it. Leggy round-card girls and fighters with wandering eyes are never a good mix.

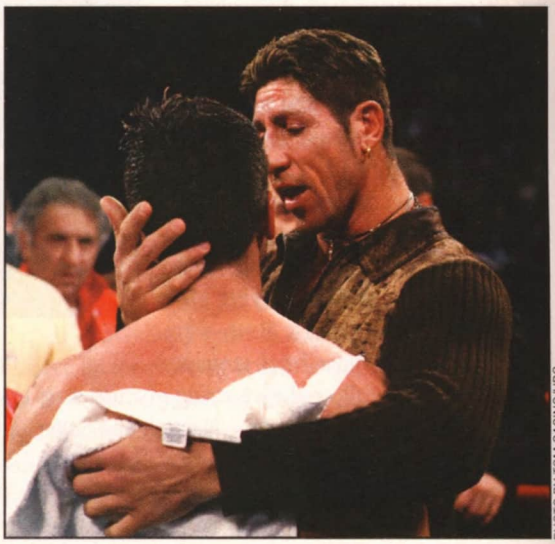


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

The only thing worse than losing a close decision in a tough fight is having your brother try to make out with you afterward. Let's hope for Gianluca Branco's sake that isn't what's going on in this picture. Following his competitive loss to Arturo Gatti in January, Branco's big brother, Silvio, moved in to embrace his younger sibling. No truth to the rumor that the Brancos are seeking revenge in a brother tag team match against Arturo and Joe Gatti.

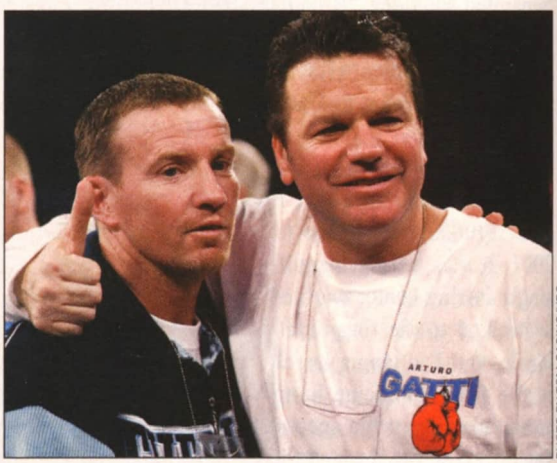


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Once they were on opposite sides, but now Micky Ward and Pat Lynch are both members of Team Gatti—even if the former serves in an unofficial capacity. If it seems strange to see onetime adversaries getting along so well, just remember how much money Gatti's manager and Ward helped one another make.

PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

While they probably aren't going to sell a lot of shoes to the Frazier family this way, adidas nonetheless obviously believes in the selling power of the Ali name, and the athletic wear company unveiled this huge wallscape featuring both Muhammad and Laila in Harlem in February. And conveniently enough, if your adidas sneakers start to fall apart, you can take them to Better Way Shoe Repair, located directly below the former heavyweight champ.

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

What do Frank Sinatra and Angel Manfredy have in common, you may ask? Well, they both have blue eyes ... and they've both headlined at Foxwoods! But whereas the late "Chairman Of The Board" headlined there with great success for five consecutive nights in 1993, the former "El Diablo" had a rougher go of it, fighting at the Connecticut casino just once, and losing to Stevie Johnston via unanimous decision.

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK/HBO

"Good fight, and by the way, here's one more right hand to remember me by!" Rafael Marquez apparently didn't get all of his aggression out in the meager 3 minutes 22 seconds that his bantamweight title defense against Pete Frissina lasted, so he gave "Sweet Pete" one last tap on the chin after the fight was over. Notice that the quality of Frissina's defense while sitting on his stool was about the same as it was throughout the fight.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Going into his August 1949 middleweight title eliminator with Sugar Ray Robinson at Yankee Stadium, Steve Belloise seemed to think he was going to carve Robinson up, but it didn't quite work out that way. Sugar Ray knocked "The Spider" down at the end of the sixth round, and Belloise remained on his stool at the start of the seventh. Maybe Belloise would've had a little more luck if he'd been allowed to bring that knife into the ring with him.

NEW FACES

ARCHAK TER-MELIKSETIAN

Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

PRO RECORD

2002		
Aug. 3	Jaime Barahona, Phoenix, AZ	KO 1
Oct. 25	Spencer Harsley, Elizabeth, NJ	KO 1
Nov. 22	Andres Larrinaga, Atlantic City	KO 1
2003		
Feb. 14	Arthur Medina, Reading, PA	KO 1
April 4	Joseph Wayne Farmer, Bushkill, PA	KO 1
May 3	Bernardo Guereca, Las Vegas	W 6
Dec. 12	Warren Kronberger, Tucson, AZ	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
7	7	0	0	6

Archak Ter-Meliksetian would walk home from school each day, and deal with the same inquisition from friends: "When are you going to tell your father?" It got a little nerve-wracking, being pestered to reveal the great secret Ter-Meliksetian had carried for safekeeping. One day he would muster up enough courage to tell his dad, "I'm following a different athletic path than you."

Vachagan Ter-Meliksetian was an accomplished gymnast in Russia, so successful that he uprooted his family and trekked halfway across the world to accept an invitation to coach the Brazilian national gymnastics team. Vachagan had plans for his young son, but Archak had other ideas for himself—after discovering boxing.

"I was 10 and I was walking around my neighborhood when I looked into the window of this boxing gym," recalled Ter-Meliksetian, who speaks Spanish and conducted interviews with THE RING through interpreter Freddie Cadena, a fellow fight-

(Continued on page 62)

LENNOX LEWIS' RETIREMENT

For Now Or Forever?

PHOTO BY IAN WALDIE/GETTY IMAGES

Lewis announces his retirement at a London press conference in early-February. If he sticks to his decision and never makes a comeback, Lewis will join Gene Tunney and Rocky Marciano as the only heavyweight champions to retire as champ and stay retired.

By Brian Doogan

On Friday, February 6, 28 minutes after the appointed hour of 11 a.m., Lennox Lewis appeared almost regally through a set of blue curtains at the back of The Great Room in the Grovesnor House Hotel on London's Park Lane, walked alone down the aisle to a dais at the front, and turned to face a suitably large gathering of family, friends, and media to announce his abdication as boxing's world heavyweight king. Not even Caesar enjoyed such a glorifying end.

In keeping with the distinguishing characteristics of his career and title reign, Lewis' valedictory speech was dignified and he singled out the important people around him, those who had stuck by him through thick and thin, to express his heartfelt gratitude: Emanuel Steward, the trainer he turned to after his shocking stoppage defeat to Oliver McCall; Harold "The Shadow" Knight, "the left hand to Manny Steward's right"; Courtney Shand, who played on the same football team as Lewis while they were growing up in Ontario,

PHOTO BY IAN WALDIE/GETTY IMAGES

Lewis thanked his entire team during his retirement announcement, but singled out his mother, Violet. She has played a major role in his career, but has been anxious for her son to retire for some time. "I'll sleep easier now," she said, adding that he'll make a fine husband and father.

Canada, and was later to become his conditioner and confidante; Prince, Patrick, Egerton Marcus, Kojo, Joe Dunbar, and more besides, he mentioned them all.

But the highest praise was reserved for his mother, Violet, whose heart was broken years ago when she discovered that Carlton Brooks, the father of the son she was carrying in her womb, was married to another woman. In her grief, she considered terminating her pregnancy, but she resolved herself to bringing up the child who would grow into this 38-year-old man who stood before this gathering now and tenderly told her: "Mum, for everything, I love you."

Lewis was never joined umbilically to boxing as he was to his mother—his emotional commitment to his sport and its unique demands of body and soul always seeming from the outside to be slightly forced—but within hours of announcing his retirement, there were people doubting that he really would be able to walk away.

"Only two other men, Gene Tunney and Rocky Marciano, have retired as champion and stayed retired," Lewis pointed out himself. "I promise you that I will be the third."

But William Hill, the British betting firm, was laying odds of 7 to 2 that Britain's heavyweight giant would be back

FILLING THE VACANCY

Vitali Klitschko has not given up the ghost of one day facing Lennox Lewis again in the ring, but first he looks set to fight Corrie Sanders in another historic meeting. If the bout takes place, the winner will be recognized by THE RING as world heavyweight champion following Lewis' retirement.

That Klitschko, 33-2 (32), should be given this opportunity is only fitting. In six rounds in Los Angeles last summer, the 6'7" Ukrainian looked every inch a champion in the making. Indeed, he might have become champion that night had it not been for the deep cuts Lewis inflicted around his left eye, which caused the bout to be stopped. Sanders, 39-2 (29), is an intriguing opponent. Not only will it be for the title, there is also a revenge factor involved as the South African knocked out Klitschko's brother, Wladimir, in two rounds last March.

"I was in my brother's corner that night and it was a big surprise to me, a shock," Klitschko said during a weeklong visit to Europe before returning to Los Angeles, where he now lives with his wife and two sons. "Sanders is a good fighter to have beaten Wladimir, and I know it won't be easy for me. I won't underestimate him. He's a really strong puncher. But our business with him is not finished. It is not a done deal. Now he has to face the Klitschko brother.

"It is my goal to win the world heavyweight title. It is a real honor that it will be for THE RING championship belt. But this is also family business. It's important for me, for my brother, and for my family to knock out Corrie Sanders. I want to do this very much."

As this issue went to bed, Klitschko-Sanders looked set to fill one of HBO's pay-per-view slots in April or May, dates that had been tentatively set aside for Lewis-Klitschko II. Lewis' retirement scuppered those plans and disappointed Klitschko, who believed he would prevail in a rematch.

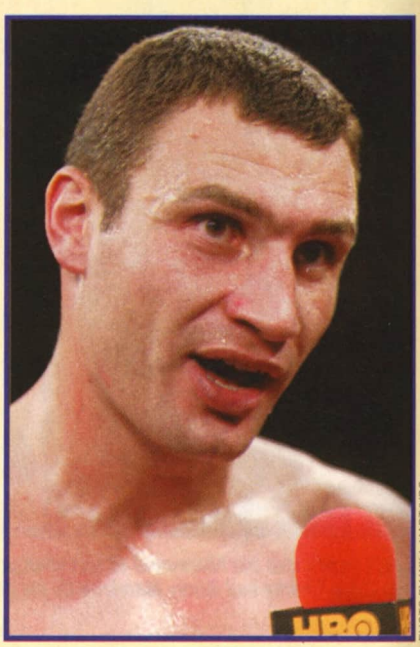
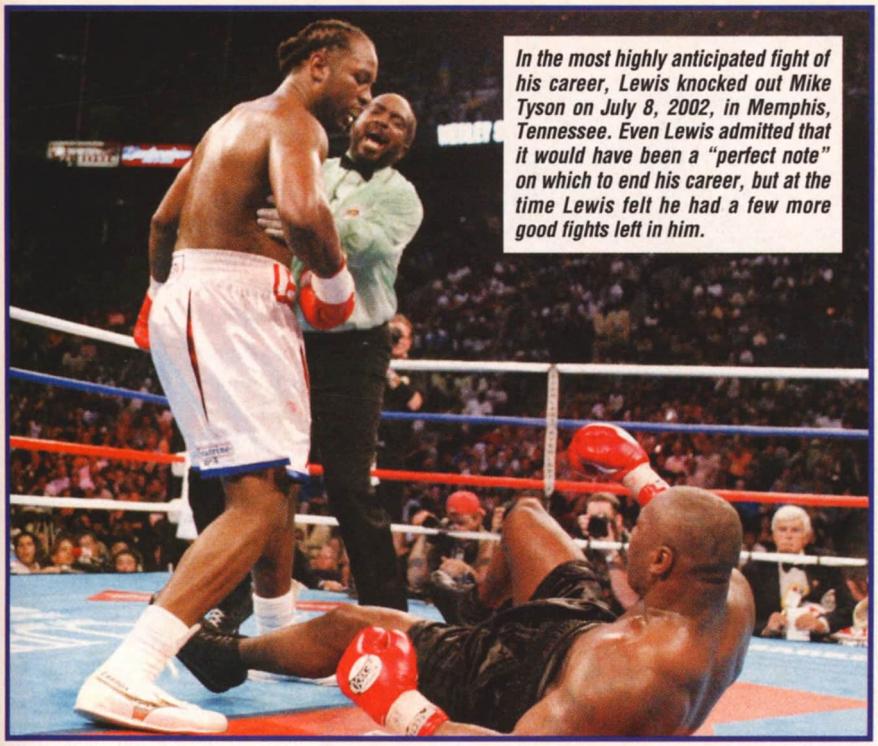


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

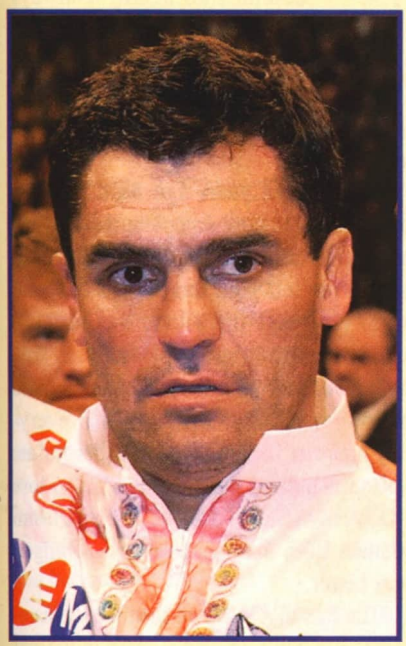
Klitschko: Anxious to avenge his brother's loss

"Perhaps Lennox was tired of pressure from me, pressure from the public, pressure from the WBC (who had ordered a Lewis-Klitschko rematch or the Briton would be stripped of their belt), and pressure from the media,"



In the most highly anticipated fight of his career, Lewis knocked out Mike Tyson on July 8, 2002, in Memphis, Tennessee. Even Lewis admitted that it would have been a "perfect note" on which to end his career, but at the time Lewis felt he had a few more good fights left in him.

in the ring within two years of retirement. When it comes to "coming back" in boxing, the cynical line is that "they all do." Jack Johnson did and so did Dempsey. Joe Louis, too, a ghost on the night that Marciano knocked him through the ring



Sanders: Eager to accommodate Vitali

Klitschko reasoned. "He didn't want people telling him what to do. But he can come back. That is always an option for him, and I would be honored to fight him again. I'll be ready anytime to give him a chance after I realize my dream of becoming champion. We could even fight this year still, why not?"

But Lewis is adamant he is retired for good.

"I'm excited about the future of boxing and the future of the heavyweight division," Lewis said. "I know Vitali is disappointed that we won't be facing each other in the ring again. But the challenge before him now is the same challenge that I faced years ago: to become the best heavyweight of his generation. I look forward to watching Vitali, Corrie Sanders, Wladimir—the Klitschko brothers are hot—and other boxers compete for that honor. It's now over to you."

Sanders sounded eager to take up the gauntlet.

"I'm going to whack Klitschko like he's never been whacked before," Sanders said. "Nobody gave me a chance against Wladimir. That was a good fight and this one will be even better."

—BD

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PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

End of the line: Lewis slams a left hand into the bloody face of Vitali Klitschko during their June 2003 fight in Los Angeles. Lewis survived a tough night to stop Klitschko on cuts in the sixth, and if he keeps his promise to stay retired, it was the Englishman's final ring appearance.

ropes at Madison Square Garden and into permanent retirement. Even Ali returned and left the stage he had enchanted like Mozart's music to the sad sound of a cowbell after 10 rounds of being beaten up by Trevor Berbick in the Bahamas. Why should Lewis then be any different?

Lewis moved to a room at the back of The Great Room in order to explain his decision. Speculation had persisted ever since that hard night in Los Angeles last June against the giant Ukrainian Vitali Klitschko, when Lewis clung on desperately to his crown, that the world heavyweight champion would summon up one final effort, that he would answer Klitschko's call for a rematch with one last emphatic statement. Steward fueled this belief by revealing in January that he was readying himself and the team for training camp in the Poconos. The Lion in winter had apparently been stirred.

But it was while he was in New York and negotiations were being held with Klitschko and his promoter, Klaus-Peter Kohl, and television paymaster HBO that Lewis concluded that it was no longer worth his effort. He could live with his legacy, with all that he has done. He could feel content, fulfilled. Whatever the question marks others may say were there, for him they had all been removed. Importantly, too, something was missing: the hunger that had driven him on at an age when only George Foreman and Jersey Walcott, of his predecessors in the line that can be traced back to John L. Sullivan, were still able to reign as champions.

"It was a long and hard decision," he said. "But then again it was an easy one because of the fact that I'd been looking at retirement a couple of fights ago. For such a long time I was thinking, *Shall I go back in there and have one last fight?* This is the drug of the sport. There's always somebody to fight. I realized that I don't want to get caught up in it. There has to be a time at which I should gracefully bow out. You could say I got sick of people saying, 'What are you still fighting for?' And there was the question of hunger. If I wasn't hungry, then I definitely shouldn't box anymore. I think that was the telling blow."

There was also, he revealed, the not-so-small matter of the love of a girl and his love for her. Seated to his right, as his mother smiled quietly on his left shoulder, was Violet Chang, and Lewis took great delight in raising her left hand gently to show off the diamond ring on her engagement finger. One ring swapped for another. But what if family life and quiet repose on the beaches of Jamaica, his spiritual home, were to become too quiet? What if the carrot is dangled before him, the opportunity once more to be The Man and enough money to own all the rum in Kingston?

"I'll just look at it as silly," Lewis insisted. "You know, I used to be a great basketball player. I stopped for a while. When I tried to play again, all of a sudden I couldn't dribble. The things I used to do I couldn't do again. It always surprises me when people take so much time out of the ring and then try to come back. They're just creating problems for themselves, and I don't want to do that.

"I set out 15 years ago on a mission. That mission is now complete. I had to go through all those trials and tribulations. And let me tell you, there were a lot out there. Not just physical, but mental. Nobody likes to lose. People question you, doubt you, and you start to question and doubt yourself. But I believe that everything happens for a reason. In order for me to become great, I had to lose. I had to lose to Oliver McCall. I had to lose to Hasim Rahman. Both times I came back stronger. I was better.

"The fact that Rahman continually disrespected me really ignited a spark in me and brought that hunger back. He took advantage of his five minutes of fame and pretended that he was the heavyweight champion, but I was only lending him that title. To knock him out in four rounds when he'd knocked me out in five, that was a happy moment for me. This is what happens when I take my opponent seriously and really pre-

PHOTO BY ANDREW REDINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

"I set out 15 years ago on a mission. That mission is now complete … I believe that everything happens for a reason. In order for me to become great, I had to lose. I had to lose to Oliver McCall. I had to lose to Hasim Rahman. Both times I came back stronger."

pare for a guy. Then there's nobody in the world who can beat me."

Tellingly, he had now slipped into the present tense. But there were more reflections.

"The fight with Mike Tyson two years ago in Memphis was the ultimate fight for me," he said. "It was a fight that had been plaguing me for years. People were always saying, 'Tyson's the best,' and I was saying, 'He can't be, unless he fights me. Until he does, you can't call him the best.' I was so attuned to that fight, so focused and so close to him in the danger zone. I was very comfortable. I didn't want the history books to say that Tyson was the best and that they couldn't get a comparison between me and him.

"I had thought then about that fight being the perfect note on which to end my career. But it was a situation where I felt I had a couple more fights left in me that persuaded me to go on. But after a year off, I decided I needed a warmup fight. That was supposed to be against Kirk Johnson. But in boxing, there's always 'politricks' involved. Somehow he hurt his heart muscle. There were rumors that he'd accepted money to step aside and suddenly there was another boxer who was ready and who'd been training for me.

"But I felt very confident, not totally ready but ready enough for Vitali Klitschko. I took him at 10 days notice. Not too many heavyweight champions in history have ever done that. The fight wasn't pretty, but I was able to come out with the win. I keep reading that the fight was suddenly stopped by a cut. But I created that cut. In fact, I created five cuts around his face. And the tides were turning in that fight. I was bringing him into the deep end, and he wouldn't have survived the next few rounds."

It was natural that there should be all these reminiscences. Lewis was enjoying this look back over his long journey from Seoul in 1988 and his Olympic gold medal success against Riddick Bowe to the Staples Center in Los Angeles when he dug as deep as he had ever needed to against Klitschko. But a deeper satisfaction was evident in the serene face of Violet Lewis, the mother who had been to every one of her son's fights, even back in the snow banks in Canada. Listening to her left little doubt that Lewis will resist being dragged back into the wars. When he turned professional, he made her give up the job she held for 17 years in a factory producing insulating material. She was the cornerstone of all his training camps, cooking for him, making sure always that he kept his room tidy.

"I'm relieved. I'll sleep easier now," she said. "It's very emotional when you sit down and watch your son in the ring. It's like you're in the labor room again. It can be that painful. I was at ringside the night Michael Watson suffered his injuries against Chris Eubank, and that brings it home. The worst night for me was when Lennox lost to Rahman. I went over to make sure he was okay.

"Lennox is a very nice person, and I'm very happy about his engagement to Violet. It's time for someone to make him happy. He'll make a very good husband and father. But I'm his mother, so he's special to me. He still has to make his bed, and every day I tell him off—and he listens."

Her feeling of relief was echoed by Egerton Marcus, Lewis' sparring partner from his amateur days right up to his final fight.

"This is a wonderful day, a beautiful day. I've watched my brother accomplish his dream, and now he walks away from the table on top. That's beautiful, perfect," he said. "I've sparred with him countless rounds. He's gone to war on me, I've gone to war on him, trying to make each other better. It's tough love."

And now it is over. Lewis is not the kind of man to go back on a decision like this. Just as he calculated his moves in the ring, he took his time to calculate this move. He does not stand among the great world heavyweight champions like Ali and Louis, Dempsey, Johnson, and Marciano, Larry Holmes, Foreman, Joe Frazier, and Sonny Liston. Even in his own era he did not dominate. Tyson and Evander Holyfield were past their best when he fought and beat them. He never met Bowe as a professional. But, as Marcus said, he walks away from the table on top. In 15 years of fist fighting, Lennox Lewis, who leaves an overall pro record of 41-2-1 (32), never faced a man he did not beat—which certainly says something. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

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Feb. 1984: Don King Talks And Talks And Talks. Plus: Leonard's return, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, 1983 quotes, Marvin Hagler, Johnny Bratton, Gerald Hayes, Hagler-Duran color.

June 1984: Bumphus, Lockridge, Duva: "That Championship Year." Plus: Ferdie Pacheco, Harry Arroyo, Holmes-Coetzee preview, Pipino Cuevas, Aaron Pryor, Battling Nelson-Joe Gans, Witherspoon-Page.

July 1984: Bazooka's Aim Is True: Gomez Shoots Down LaPorte In The Battle For San Juan. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Tyrone Crawley, Leonard's comeback, Chandler-Sandoval, Hagler-Roldan.

Aug. 1984: RING Olympic Special. Plus: Bramble-Mancini, Hatcher-Bumphus, Mark Breland, Sugar Ray Leonard, Albert Davila, Bonecrusher-Bruno.

Oct. 1984: The Beast From The East: John Mugabi Strikes Terror Into The Hearts Of Men. Plus: Olympics, Bill Costello, Davey Moore, Wilfred Benitez, King's heavyweights.

Dec. 1984: Hagler Hammers Hamsho. Plus: Barry McGuigan, James Broad, Pinklon Thomas, Julian Jackson.

Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

March 1985: Thomas Hearns—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Annual ratings, Fight, Upset, Round, Comeback, and Prospect of the Year.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To THE RING Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Oct. 1985: The "Macho Man" Rides Again. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Berbick-Green, John E. Garcia, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, McCallum-Braxton.

Nov. 1985: Will Hagler Feast On The Beast? Plus: Hagler-Mugabi & Hearns-Shuler previews, Lonnie Smith, Pintor-Meza, Chuck Hull, Benitez-Moley.

Dec. 1985: Michael Spinks: Against All Odds. Plus: Curry-McCrory preview, McGuigan-Taylor, Alexis Arguello, Michael Olajide, Chavez-Pratchett.

Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

May 1986: Hagler vs. Mugabi: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Bramble-Crawley, Tyson-Ferguson, 10 worst decisions.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

July 1986: Spinks-Holmes II: Who Really Won? Plus: Frank Bruno, Richie Sandoval, Kevin Watts, Tyson-Tillis, Boza-Edwards-Alli, Johnson-Burns.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

April 1987: Hagler-Leonard Souvenir Issue. Plus: Czyz, Orlando Canizales, Mugabi-Thomas, Biggs-Snipes, Chavez-LaPorte, Bonecrusher-Witherspoon II, Haugen-Paul.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, THE RING annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new RING ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn—Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Lockridge & Mayweather, Tony Burton, Julio Cesar Chavez, blood.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Jan. 1990: Boxing's Bible Reborn At Age 68. Plus: Carlos Monzon, Mike Tyson, Leonard-Duran, Daniel Zaragoza, Nunn-Barkley, Whitaker-Ramirez, George Foreman (color).

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: Nigel Benn Plays By His Own Rules. Plus: Roberto Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, Jimmy Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again—How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

Dec. 1991: Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson: Who Will Win And Why. Plus: Eddie Aliano, Jack Britton, Muhammad Ali, Pernell Whitaker, rating the 44 world champions, Marcel Cerdan, Henry Cooper, Ezzard Charles-Jersey Joe Walcott (color).

May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Rocky Graziano, Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Warring, Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upsets Boxing's Balance Of Power. Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

Dec. 1995: Mike Tyson (vs. Peter McNeeley): The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Morrison-Lewis preview, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, 10 best chins.

Jan. 1996: King Bruno! A Hero Always ... A Winner At Last. Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Chris Eubank, Eddie Perkins, who's hot/who's not.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

Sept. 1996: Lennox Lewis: Tough Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lewis-Mercer, Olympic team, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Johnson, Rocky, Scrapiron Johnson, heavyweight hopefuls.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

Dec. 1996: Our Spin On Roy Jones. Plus: heavyweight division, Olympic recap, Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rican fighters, Danny Hodge, Saad Muhammad.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

Oct. 1997: Bang! Naseem Hamed Takes Aim At America. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Phillips-Tszyu, Saman Sorjaturong, Bobby Dykes.
Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Conley, Hall of Fame, gloves,
Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone! Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.
Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.
March 1998 (92-Page Special): Into The Millennium With The Real Deal: The Ring's Timeline For Evander Holyfield. Plus: Hernandez-Hernandez, Briggs-Foreman, 10 champs recall "The Day I Won The Title," Johnny Thompson.
April 1998: Evander Holyfield: The Ring's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.
June 1998 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Tyson-King, David Reid, Bernard Hopkins, Ken Norton.
July 1998: Holyfield ... Tapia ... Hamed ... Jones ... Trinidad ... De La Hoya: Who Will Be The First To Fall? Plus: Magic Johnson, Chavez-Gonzalez & Lopez-Alvarez, underappreciated boxers.
Aug. 1998: Lennox Lewis: No Holyfield, No Glory. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Pat & Mike McMurtry, Chris Byrd, unbreakable records, contenders & pretenders.
Sept. 1998 (92-Page Special): This Man's Not Unbeatable! Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle. Plus: John Tate, Freddie Norwood, Andrew Golota, Roy Jones, 12 greatest finishes.
Oct. 1998: Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring. Plus: Hector Camacho Jr., Mayweather-Hernandez preview, *Tuesday Night Fights*.
Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.
Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.
March 1999: De La Hoya vs. Quartey: Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar? Plus: Sugar Shane Mosley, Lopez-Alvarez II, Roy Jones, Coley Wallace.
April 1999 (92-Page Special): Fighter Of The Year: Floyd Mayweather Jr.: "He's So Good, It's Scary!" Plus: Fernando Vargas, James Page, Luisito Espinosa, Robinson-Gatti II, Archie Moore, Carlos Oritz, 1998 diary.
May 1999: Is It All Over For Tyson? Plus: Terry Norris, Vinny Pazienza, Jesus Pimental, stoppages, mandatories.
June 1999: The Fans Have Spoken: Results Of The Ring Readers' Poll. Plus: Michael Grant, De La Hoya-Quartey, Antwun Echols, Ted Lowry.
July 1999 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Holyfield-Lewis, Felix Trinidad, Stevie Johnston, Emile Griffith, Phil Zwick.
Aug. 1999: Candidates For Greatness: Can Anyone Fill The Heavyweight Void? Plus: Tim Austin, Naseem Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Max Schmeling, Holyfield-Lewis.
Sept. 1999: Taking Stock In The Fight Game: Who's Hot, Who's Not. Plus: Tony Ayala, Keith Holmes, Denny & Phil Moyer, scoring.
Oct. 1999 (92-Page Special): Felix & Oscar Go To War! Who's Going To Prevail In The Welter Shootout? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Harry Simon, Omar Sheika, Al Andrews, 20 greatest fighters of 20th century.
Dec. 1999: Insiders' Analysis: Can Roy Jones Chop Down The Best Heavyweights? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, David Reid, David Tua, Carmen Basilio, Johnny Summerlin.
Holiday 1999 (92-Page Special): Heavyweight Showdowns! Holyfield vs. Lewis II, Grant vs. Golota. Plus: Francois Botha, Arturo Gatti, Michael Carbajal, Rocky Marciano, Lou Filippo.
Jan. 2000: What Does Trinidad's Victory Over Oscar Mean? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Paul Spadafora, Ralph Dupas, boxing media.
March 2000: Lennox Lewis: The Champ For The Millennium ... Or Just For The Moment? Plus: Oleg Maskaev, Main Events, Derrick Jefferson, Jerry Buss, IBF scandal.
April 2000 (92-Page Special): Paulie Ayala—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Grant-Golota, Stephan Johnson, Gaspar Ortega, Kitten Hayward, writers' favorite fights.
May 2000: Lennox Lewis Will Quit ... Or Get Knocked Out, By Michael Grant. Plus: Roy Jones, Quartey-Vargas preview, Garth Panter, best chins, boxing movies.
June 2000: The Honors Keep Coming! Lenox Lewis Receives The Undisputed Ring Belt. Plus: Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, Teddy Atlas, Mike Tyson, Don Fullmer.
July 2000 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Zab Judah, Oscar De La Hoya, Barrera-Morales, Ken Buchanan, Beau Jack, Eric Bottjer.
Aug. 2000: Hamed! And The Men Who Want To Kick His Naz! Plus: David Reid, James Prince, Anthony Fletcher, Micky Ward, final beatings, white hopes.
Sept. 2000: A New Look At Lennox Lewis: Is He An All-Time Great? Plus: Winky Wright, Michael Moorer, De La Hoya & Vargas, Eddie McGoorty.
Oct. 2000 (92-Page Special): Move Up Or Shut Up! We're Sick Of Roy Jones' Heavyweight Tease. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Tapia & Romero, Hasim Rahman, Dwight Qawi, Al Palzer, fight films, best refs.
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Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis. Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.
Jan. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Trinidad's Destiny: Jones Is On His Mind ... But Vargas Is In His Face! Plus: Naseem Hamed, Tszyu-Judah, Evander Holyfield, Willie Bean, 20 greatest middleweights.
Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: The Ring's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.
March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.
April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.
May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.
June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.
July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.
Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights*.
Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Ring Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.
Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.
Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.
Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest feather-weights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.
March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.
May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.
June 2002: Lennox Lewis: I'll End The Tyson "Freak Show!" Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Freitas-Casamayor, De La Hoya & Vargas, Hagler & Leonard.
July 2002 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Preview: The Oscar-Fernando Hatefest. Plus: Hopkins & Monzon, Francisco Bojado, Buddy McGirt, Lionel Rose, State of the Game.
Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.
Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.
Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.
Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: The Ring 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.
Dec. 2002: Ward & Gatti Look To Hit Another Grand Slam! Plus: Forrest-Mosley II, Barrera-Morales II, Manny Pacquiao, Tim Austin, Nino Benvenuti, Mark Taffet.
Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.
Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.
March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.
April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. *Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones,*
May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.
June 2003: Exclusive! The Ring Grills George Foreman. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Ricardo Mayorga, Diego Corrales, Tommy Loughran.
July 2003 (108-Page Extra): Now What, Roy? How Jones Matches Up Against The Heavyweight Elite. Also: Mike Tyson, Marquez Brothers, Ricardo Williams, Tony Zale.
Aug. 2003: The Ring Unscrambles The Heavyweight Mess. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Scott Harrison, Billy Warren, Latino revolution, cups.
Sept. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Oscar At 30: Forget About Retirement ... He Has Revenge On His Mind. Also: Mayorga-Forrest II preview, James Toney, Barney Ross, HBO, report cards.
Oct. 2003: James Toney vs. Bernard Hopkins: The Ghost Of Superfights Past. Also: De La Hoya-Mosley II preview, Jermain Taylor, Sharmba Mitchell, biggest hearts.
Nov. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Healing And Hungry: Vitali Klitschko—Is He The Man To Retire Lewis? Also: Gatti-Ward III, Holyfield-Toney, Dominick Guinn, Lee Roy Murphy, The Ring 100.
Dec. 2003: The Craziest Man In The Sport: Mayorga Lights Up Boxing. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Fernando Vargas, Manuel Medina, Curtis Cokes, Rasheem Brown.
Jan. 2004 (108-Page Extra): Shane-Oscar II: The 10 Questions You Want Answered! Also: Laila Ali, Mark Johnson, Jimmy McClarnin, The Ring championship, broke boxers, division-by-division analysis.
Feb. 2004: James Toney Told You So! "Lights Out" Is A Heavyweight Force. Also: Mosley-De La Hoya II, CompuBox, Yaqui Lopez, Ishme Smith.
March 2004 (108-Page Extra): Audley Harrison, Dominick Guinn, Joe Mesi: Who Will Be The Next Star Heavyweight? Also: Floyd Mayweather, Arturo Gatti, Erik Morales, what's ahead for 2004.
April 2004: Antonio Tarver: "It's Not About Roy Jones Anymore." Also: Pacquiao-Barrera, Floyd Mayweather, all punch/no chin, Rinty Monaghan.

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Fighting Tarver Again Is Very Un-Roy-Like

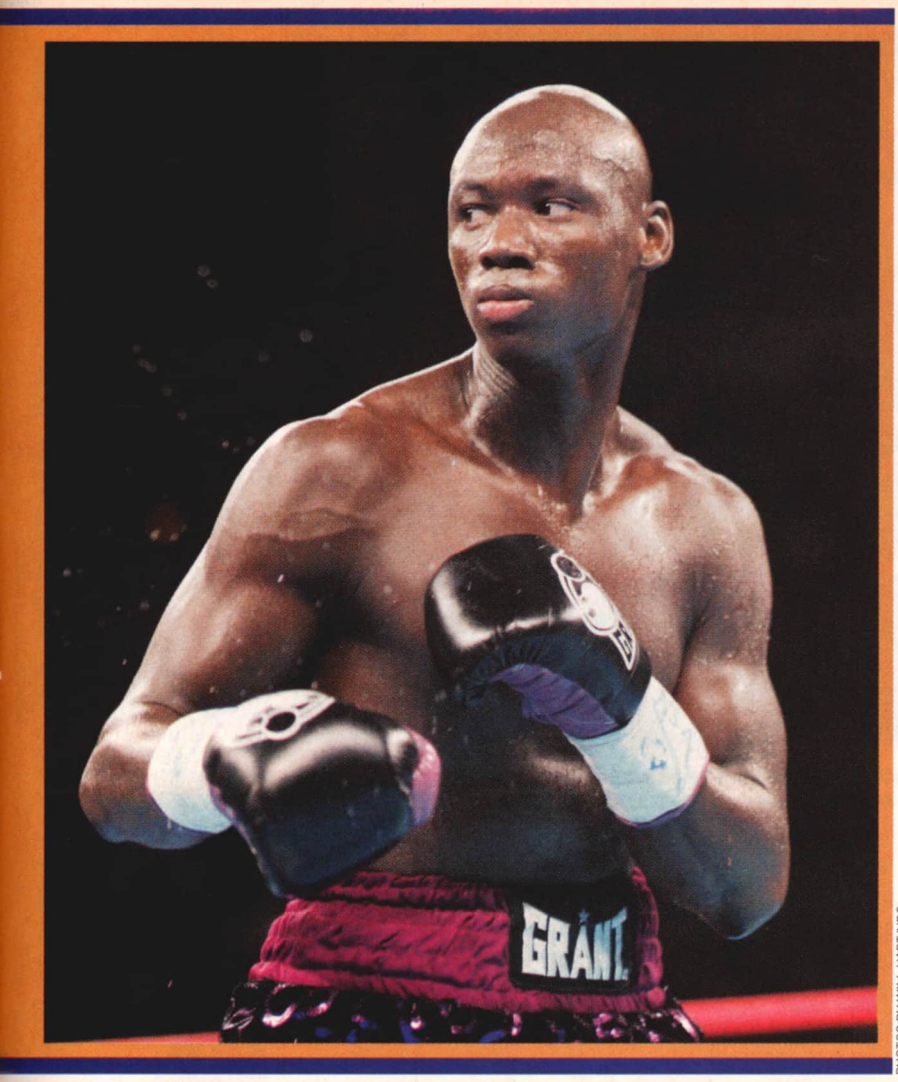
IS JONES BEING SET UP BY HIS EGO?

By William Dettloff

It is one of the great cosmic jokes in life and in the fight game that ego drives men to great accomplishment and to disaster. We've seen it over and over. The very ego that impelled Joe Louis and Ray Robinson and Muhammad Ali and others into the Hall of Fame also eventually led them to great misery. The time came, as it does for all prize fighters, when it would have been far better for them to lose their ego and slide into the comfortable banality the rest of us endure. But ego doesn't let you go. You can't turn it off when it's no longer advantageous for you to use it. It's there, in you, whether or not you want it to be. And it doesn't come with a useful governor.

There is no mistaking the value and influence of ego in the career of world light heavyweight champion Roy Jones. You hear it when he talks of himself in the third person. You see it in the ring, such as when he hid his right arm behind his back, sprung off the ropes, and cold-cocked poor, miscast Glen Kelly. You see it when he dictates lopsided financial terms to potential opponents irrespective of their relative worth, and does the same to the suits at HBO. Oddly and not altogether unsurprisingly, you saw it too last November when he battled from what looked like eventual defeat to outlast and outpoint Antonio Tarver. Don't be fooled; that was mostly ego that forced him to bite down on his mouthpiece like that and fight. It was toughness too, and heart to be sure, two qualities we'd never seen fully realized in Jones. But mostly it was his ego instructing them.

Jones isn't close to the tired, pitiable relic Louis was at the end, nor to Robinson or Ali, even though he almost certainly is, at 35 years old, fighting past his prime. Hell, he hasn't even retired yet and had his ego tug him back into the



PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

But that's ego for you. It was by Jones' own admission, following the first Tarver fight, that his vividly un-Jones-like performance was owed to two factors: his struggle at coming down from heavyweight and making the 175-pound limit, and Tarver's own talent and toughness. Neither of those factors is likely to change in a rematch.

If you were so inclined, you could argue the veracity of the first claim. In fact, Buddy McGirt, Tarver's trainer, lobbied after the fight that as a civilian Tarver easily carries between 190 and 200 pounds, and you could see that on his tall, rangy frame. If losing that kind of weight doesn't affect him, why should it be different for Jones? Maybe the answer lies in the nature and composition of the weight lost.

"I saw Roy when he fought John Ruiz," said Montell Griffin, who famously split two fights with Jones and was outpointed by Tarver. "Usually, when light heavyweights go up to fight heavyweights, they have a little fat on them. Not Roy. He was solid muscle. So I'm sure he did have problems coming down."

It may be that losing muscle takes a greater toll on a fighter than does losing fat, but that doesn't preclude the reality

fray again, the way Ray Leonard's did over and over until Leonard finally, fitfully, was able to close his ears to it. But when it became apparent that Jones was going to sign for a rematch with Tarver, which at this writing looked likely to happen in April or May, one was forced to consider if his ego has led him to the same trap that gets all of them, sooner or later.

The question has to be asked: Why Tarver? While the fight is a natural from the point of view of the fans, it's fairly bewildering that Jones would take it. He has shown little inclination over the course of his career to do anything that is at odds with his goal of making the most money while assuming the least risk. There's bigger money to be made elsewhere. There's big risk involved. There's his legacy to think about. He has choices. He's chosen the option that could be most dangerous to him, for all the same reasons it became dangerous last time.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Tarver, who displayed excellent hand speed and timing, had more success landing cleanly than any of Jones' other opponents. Is there any reason to think that things would be different in a rematch?

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Jones should be given credit for digging deep the last two rounds, when he attacked Tarver with more fervor than he had earlier in the bout. Tarver, on the other hand, eased up at exactly the point where he should have gone for a strong finish.

that shrinking down to 175 pounds won't be any easier for Jones. By fight time, he'll be six months older than he was the first time they met, and he's not 23 years old anymore. There is every reason to believe he will have trouble making weight again, that his body is more comfortable now in its heavyweight form. He said as much after the first fight, claiming his only interest was in a heavyweight match against Mike Tyson, at least in part because making the light heavyweight limit was too hard.

It's likely too that after trying unsuccessfully for several months to arrange a big heavyweight fight against Evander Holyfield, Jones experienced a letdown going back down to light heavyweight, where he'd reigned with ease for roughly six years. That it came following arguably the biggest win of his career—the 12-round near-shutout of John Ruiz—could not have helped any.

"I think it was the combination of coming off a huge high with his defeat of Ruiz, for which he prepared himself as well, or maybe better, than for any fight he's ever had, and then, underestimating Tarver a bit and not preparing as diligently," said HBO's Larry Merchant. "I asked him before the fight to rate his condition on a scale of one to 10 and he said seven. So it was a combination of those factors, plus he was fighting a good fighter who was smart and well-prepared and hungry. I've said before that sometimes when you don't take an opponent seriously, he becomes a serious opponent."

Even those who believe Jones was weakened substantially by the weight loss concede that that was only part of his problem that night. The other was Tarver, who told us all along he would give Jones all he could handle. It's a wonder we didn't believe him. After all, when was the last time you heard someone call out Roy Jones, beg him for a fight even, and then keep on harassing him right up to the first bell? Whether or not you think he deserved the decision (we do not) Tarver proved himself to a great degree, even if Jones was compromised.

"Tarver has to be given credit for having a good fight plan and executing it," Merchant said. "He fell short; it was going so well he didn't feel he had to take risks in the later rounds to close the deal. He left it too close and lost it. Now we'll find out whether it was strictly Tarver's style and ability that would always make him a difficult fight or the combination of Jones coming off a big fight."

It could be worse than that for Jones. Conventional thinking says that in the rematch, Tarver will be better than he was the first time around. He saw Jones' speed up close, felt his power, and, even if he sticks to his story that he beat Jones up and was robbed, he must know what he did wrong and, thus, what to correct next time. He must have the advantage going in, right? Not necessarily.

"Both guys will be better," said trainer and former light heavyweight titlist Eddie Mustafa Muhammad. "They know each other's strengths and weaknesses

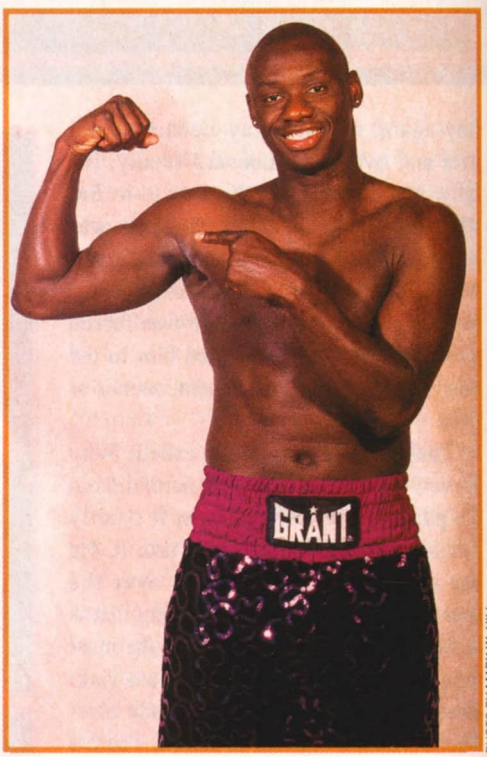


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

While he's not quite in Jones' league when it comes to the ego department, Tarver was very self-assured going into their November 2003 bout. His strong showing has given him even more confidence in his ability to upset boxing's pound-for-pound king in a rematch.

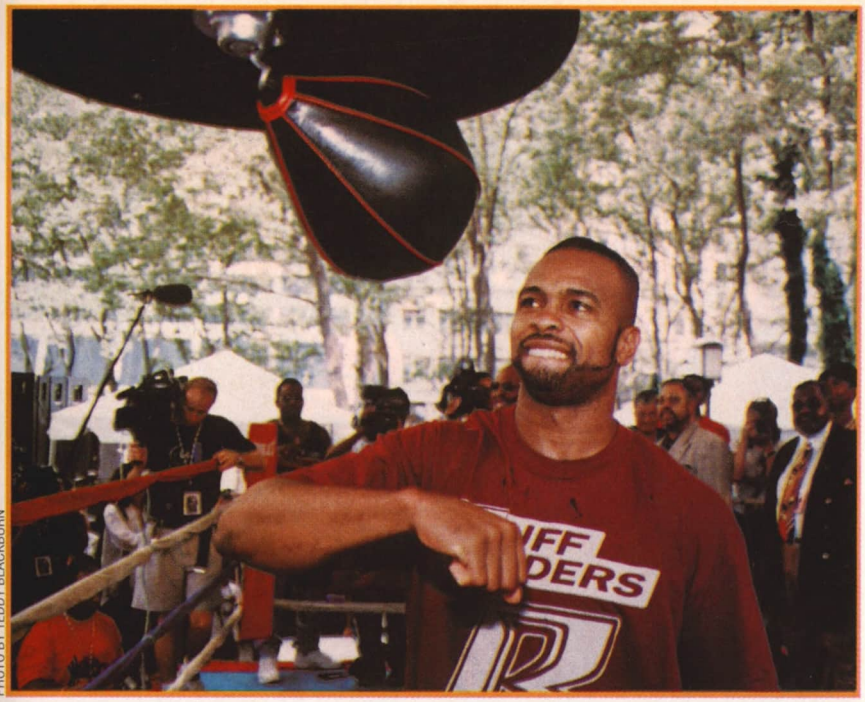


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Jones has always trained diligently, but said coming down from heavyweight to fight Tarver was very difficult. While that may be true, Tarver points out that he also had to cut a lot of weight in order to make 175 pounds. The difference is, Jones was cutting more muscle.

now. And Tarver wasn't intimidated the first time. He took it right to Roy. And the weight's not an issue. They both have to lose it; they're both big light heavyweights. It's going to come down to who can impose his will on the other."

You still could make the argument that there was a reason Tarver kept his hands to himself throughout large chunks of the middle rounds in the first fight, and, maddeningly, in the critical last two as well. Maybe it was, as Merchant theorized, that he thought he was doing enough to win, and judging by his post-fight reaction, that would seem plausible. But there is the possibility too that, in the most important fight of his life, the one he got almost solely by virtue of his ability to harangue Jones into it, he froze. Just a little. If that's the case, even a little, then history tells us it wouldn't be the case in a rematch. He's been to the big dance—with the best dancer, no less. He survived, and then some. Why not let the hands go more?

A more relaxed, more confident Tarver could seriously trouble an older, dried out Jones. More than, say, Hasim Rahman probably could, or Joe Mesi, a pair of big, slow heavyweights against whom a 200-pound Jones probably would have a field day. He's a tougher fight for Jones than any of the smaller heavyweights are, save maybe for Chris Byrd, and is certainly tougher than any cruiserweight titlist. He'll probably be a tougher fight for Jones than Bernard Hopkins, with whom Jones was reportedly negotiating again before talks dried up (talk about a meeting of egos). Regardless, he chose Tarver.

"It's probably bothering him that it was so close—too close for comfort," Griffin said. "He's had people like his family and friends telling him how close it was, and it bothers him. He wants to make a point in the rematch."

Merchant thinks there is more to it than that.

"There are two things involved: He's got an old amateur foe from his same state and there's a bit of bragging rights involved here, and I think he wants to set the record straight in terms of his worth as a light heavyweight champion. It's an intriguing fight because the first fight was the most difficult of his career.

"I also think that this is a good place for him to mark time waiting for that monster payday or mega-event that would lure him back into the heavyweight division," Merchant continued. "When you consider the options he has, there are no other light heavyweights out there who are attractive for possible big fights. The heavyweights, including the

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PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

HBO's Larry Merchant, pictured interviewing Jones following the Tarver fight, believes that several factors were involved in making the fight surprisingly close, including Tarver's savvy fight plan.

small heavyweights, Byrd and James Toney, aren't available, so what are his options? This is an attractive choice. I think he believes that if he's at nine out of 10 he can win it, it's a good fight, and he can make good money."

The thought that this is more a business decision on Jones' part than anything is not beyond the realm of possibility. He's always been more pragmatist than sentimentalist, and there are those who believe he hasn't changed. "Roy Jones is not the type of person who cares what other people think or say," said Muhammad. "He'd go right to Tyson if Tyson were available; he wouldn't do this fight. That's the biggest fight out there for him."

It's still tempting to believe there are forces other than economics and business that drove Jones back to Tarver. Consider: Jones is more concerned with his legacy now than he's ever appeared to be before (see the Ruiz fight). A cautious guy like Jones who is looking to leave behind a meaningful record of his accomplishments probably wouldn't give a rematch to the guy who *almost* beat him. As Muhammad said, "Losing would be worse. He's already got the victory over him." So what would be the point? The point is Jones' ego is doing what it's supposed to do. It's pushing him. And Jones is doing what he's supposed to do—he's listening to it. That's what fighters do. ■

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LIKE BUDDY, LIKE SON

James McGirt Takes The Inevitable Path

By Joe Santoliquito

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/HBO

His hands shook slightly as he worked the pads, sweat pouring down his face, his lips clenched tightly together. He focused on punching and movement. He'd dip, then bob up, move back, step forward, then spin around and repeat the process. Taking a brief break, he nervously shuffled his feet, trying to gauge time, trying to summon something, anything to get his mind off what he was about to do—take that long walk to the ring.

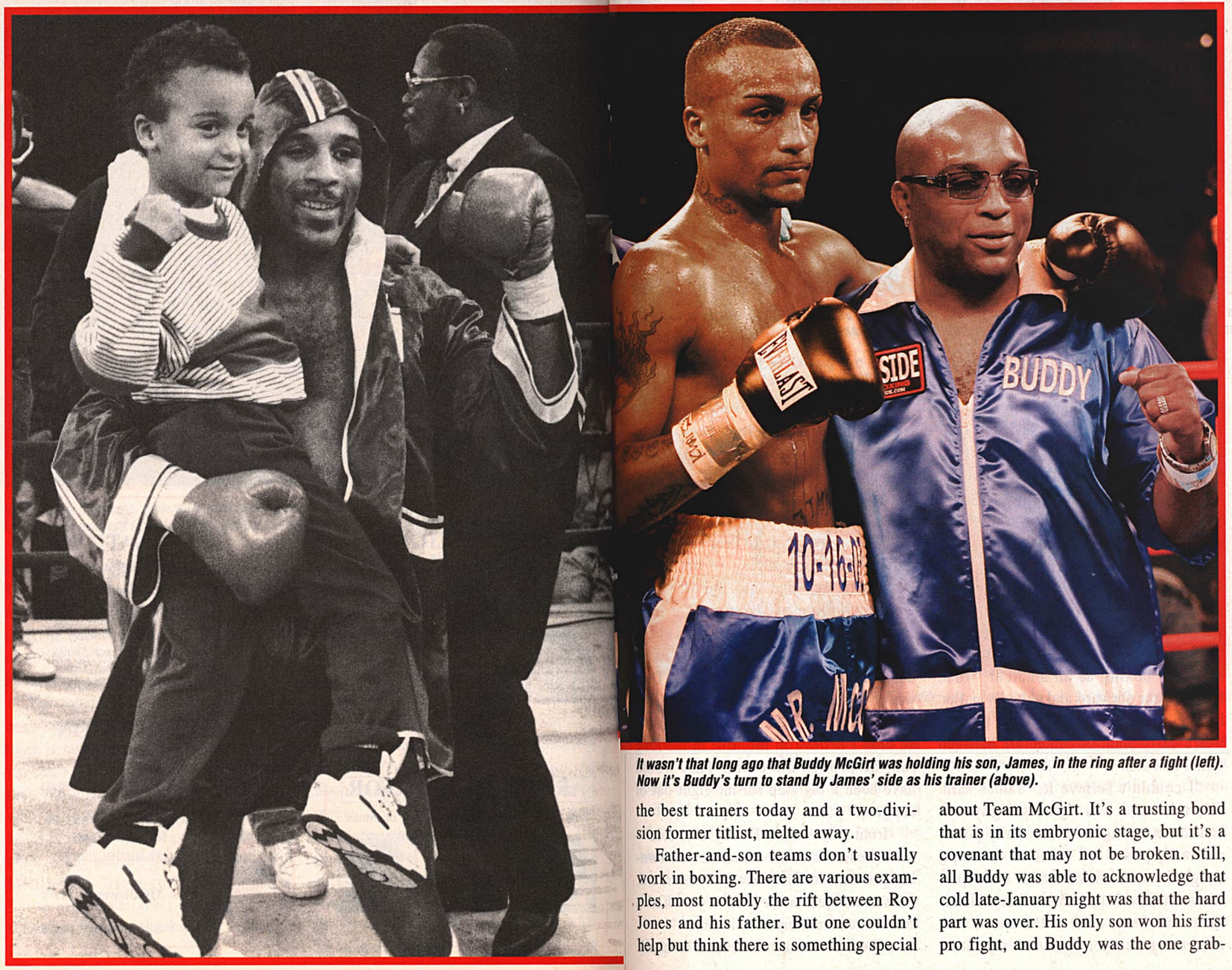
And this was the trainer!

A few hours before dispensing advice to Arturo Gatti, Buddy McGirt had a more difficult task ahead at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City: working the corner of his son, James Anthony McGirt, in his pro debut.

"Look at me," Buddy said in the dressing room before the fight, a glint of a smile creasing his face, "I never got this nervous when I fought. I'm a nervous wreck, and James is the one fighting."

The jitters soon passed once the bell rang, and James, a super middleweight, outlasted James North to win a unanimous four-round decision on the Gatti-Gianluca Branco undercard.

After they returned to the locker room, it was difficult to tell which one of them had just fought. Buddy immediately flopped down in a chair, while James, still feeling the buzz from winning his first pro fight, hopped on the balls of his feet. Then the two embraced, and the tough exterior of Buddy, one of



It wasn't that long ago that Buddy McGirt was holding his son, James, in the ring after a fight (left). Now it's Buddy's turn to stand by James' side as his trainer (above).

the best trainers today and a two-division former titlist, melted away.

Father-and-son teams don't usually work in boxing. There are various examples, most notably the rift between Roy Jones and his father. But one couldn't help but think there is something special about Team McGirt. It's a trusting bond that is in its embryonic stage, but it's a covenant that may not be broken. Still, all Buddy was able to acknowledge that cold late-January night was that the hard part was over. His only son won his first pro fight, and Buddy was the one grabbing a towel to dry his drenched face.

"Man, that was tough," sighed Buddy, wiping away tears intermixed with sweat. "I thought it was going to be just another fight, but it was different. That was horrible. It was harder than I thought it would be. Just the waiting was killing me. But once the bell rang, I was all right. But it was hard, man. You just have to keep in mind that you do the right thing by your son, and that he really doesn't get hurt. But I'm all right now."

And so was James, a successful amateur with a 44-4 record, rated number-six in the country at 165 pounds, before opting to turn pro.

Basketball had been James' passion growing up, raised by his grandmother, Doby Boynton, Buddy's mother, in Brentwood, Long Island. Basketball was James' choice partly because his father, Buddy, at the time a world titlist, wanted it that way. Still, as a child James frequently attended Buddy's fights, often being hoisted on his dad's shoulders after another victory.

It was a conundrum James was faced with: Here on one hand was a father he admired, and a sport he felt ran through his veins. But on the other hand, the same man who introduced him to boxing was adamant on preventing him from ever entering the ring. Yet James knew what he wanted to do. It didn't matter to him that he had a deft shooting touch and a silky handle on the basketball court. James was destined to box.

When James was younger, he and his cousins used to pretend they were world champs, dressing up in bathrobes and making title belts out of cardboard. When James wasn't able to attend his father's fights, he'd watch vigilantly on TV.

"It was a great experience," James recalled. "Boxing was there from the beginning. I fell in love with basketball, but I fell in love with boxing, two sports at the same time. When I got older, I made my own decisions. My dad didn't want me fighting. My father went through the hard times with boxing, and no father wants his son to go through that."

When the boxing bug finally hit James as a teenager, he wasn't about to

At first, Buddy wasn't very happy about his son becoming a boxer. He tried steering James more toward basketball, but James kept coming back to boxing, sneaking to the gym when he thought his father wasn't paying attention. Now they are a team.

ask Buddy for help, so James tried sneaking around him. He'd train at the local recreation center, where his father used to work out. But Buddy was a sneak, too. He would feign disinterest, while James was hitting the heavybag or doing some light sparring. When James went running, Buddy would frequently ask, "Why are you doing that?" James would simply tell him he needed to get some roadwork in for basketball.

But Buddy was aware. His father's intuition told him what was happening, but he was also partially in denial, hoping at some level that his son was not going to following the same path he did.

"I wanted him to play basketball; I didn't want him boxing, because he's such a talented basketball player. I thought he was talented enough to play in the NBA one day," Buddy said. "Plus, I didn't want him in the same business that I was in. I threw punches all my life so he didn't have to.

"What James started doing, though, was that he would be in the house, and then sneak to the gym. I knew why. I acted stupid and pretended that I wasn't paying any attention to him. I kept thinking to myself that eventually he would do it, he'd defy me and start boxing. I tried to persuade him not to. I tried setting him up with basketball tapes, instead of boxing tapes. But he was drawn to the sport. He was around it all of the time."

James had to undergo a little more scrutiny before his father finally surrendered and was completely comfortable with his oldest child stepping into the ring. James was ready to take his first step into boxing as an amateur, when Buddy came forward and actually pulled his son out of the fight. At the time, it was a nasty point of contention between father and son.

"I couldn't believe it," James said. "He told me I was fighting a guy that had too many fights. I was really pissed off, really pissed off. I took all the steps, weighed in, and filled out all the paperwork. I talked it up. I had all my friends there, and I was there at the arena, with everything, ready to go. And my father pulled my passbook. It was embarrassing."

The 6'1" James, who turned 21 last November, is able to look back at that occurrence with a keener perspective now than he did as a rambunctious 18-year-old, juiced and with something to prove.

"They were trying to beat the McGirt name; they were trying to put me in there with someone that had 10 fights, and much more experience over me," James said. "But at the time, I didn't know. I didn't really say anything to my dad, because you have that fear of Dad, which I still have. I just felt that he didn't have any confidence in me, that he didn't believe in me. But in the long run, he proved his point. That would have been a big step for me right out of the gate."

Ironically, it was Buddy who told—not asked, *told*—James that he was turning pro on the Gatti-Branco undercard. This came just after James just had a son, James Anthony McGirt Jr.

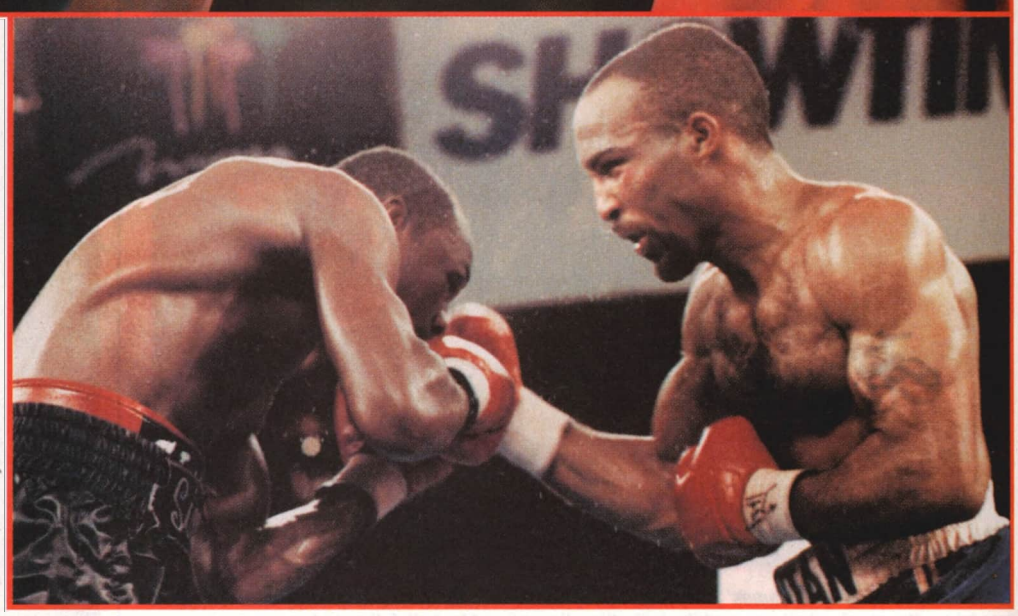
"There was one tournament to quali-

In the hours leading up to James' pro debut, Buddy was a nervous wreck, but shortly after this photo was taken, the opening bell rang and the butterflies disappeared for both father and son.

fy for the Olympic Trials, but after his son was born, James couldn't make that tournament," Buddy said. "I called him and told him he was turning pro, instead of waiting four more years. He loved the idea.

"It wasn't that difficult to train him. Once I saw that that's what James really wanted, I was behind him. I just wanted to get it started. Once the bell rang for the first fight, I was all right. The good thing that works in James' favor is that he was always around me. He's been there and experienced the things I've been through. He listens to me, and sometimes I get a little stern with him, but that's to be expected."

Buddy admits that working with his son has been cathartic. There were times when Buddy wasn't around during James' for-



Comparisons between James and his famous father are inevitable. Some similarities were obvious during James' four-round decision over James North (above). Buddy is pictured hammering out a 12-round decision over Simon Brown in 1991 (right).

mative years. "In a way I do have some regrets about not being around with James more often the way I should have," Buddy said. "I appreciate things more now. Before, I was young and running high, taking a lot of things for granted. The older you get, the more you appreciate things. It's a lesson I fought and had to go through, but a lesson well learned."

Now when the two are together, they're father-and-son, trainer-and-fighter, and they're also buddies. They tease each other about a number of things, including what James calls "that famous McGirt dome we all seem to have. My son even has it." James calls his dad "Fat Man Scoop," while Buddy counters with either "McGirt," or "Anthony." But there is a line of respect drawn when it's time to work. "If I call him James, he knows he's in trouble," Buddy said with a laugh.

Though James is still learning, he knows the inevitable comparisons are going to be broached between him and his father, a former WBC welterweight titlist and IBF junior welterweight titlist in the late-1980s and early-'90s, during a time when Julio Cesar Chavez, Pernell Whitaker, Simon Brown, and Meldrick Taylor roamed those divisions.

But James isn't concerned. He was tentative at times in his debut against North, but loosened as the fight progressed. Cheered on by a large family contingent that traveled from New York, James opened up in the fourth round, knocking down North with a straight

James gives his dad a kiss following his victorious pro debut. Part of the reason James moved from New York to Vero Beach, Florida, where Buddy lives, is to be trained by his father, but also to be closer to him. "This is the time we're making up together, for the time we missed," James said.

right to the head that helped clinch the victory.

Afterward, Buddy was relieved—and pleased. He still wants to correct James of some amateur habits, like pulling straight back from a punch. He's also trying to get James to stand his ground more and slip punches.

"The main thing I liked is that James fought a kid who made him fight," Buddy said. "The plan is to keep James busy as much as I can. I have a full schedule, but wherever I am, James has to be there. I have to get James out of the amateur habits, which is going to take time. What I like about James right now is that he has good defensive skills, but he has a ways to go. He has good eyes, good reflexes. My main thing is that I don't want to stand in his way of achieving goals. If I had to, I'd step aside, if that meant he could go to another level. I'm very proud of him, though. Getting over that first hump was important."

James sees no possible way he and his father would ever split. The reason why James moved from New York to Vero Beach, Florida, where Buddy is based, was not only to be trained by his father, but also to be closer to him.

"I love my father to death, and I can never, ever see us breaking apart. This is going to work out," James vowed. "In and out of the ring, I'm going to do what he tells me. We did miss some time together when I was a kid. But my father was a young man on top of the world at the time. He was a champion, and he's made a better life for me in the long run. This is the time we're making up together, for the time we missed. He's not only my father, but my best friend." ■

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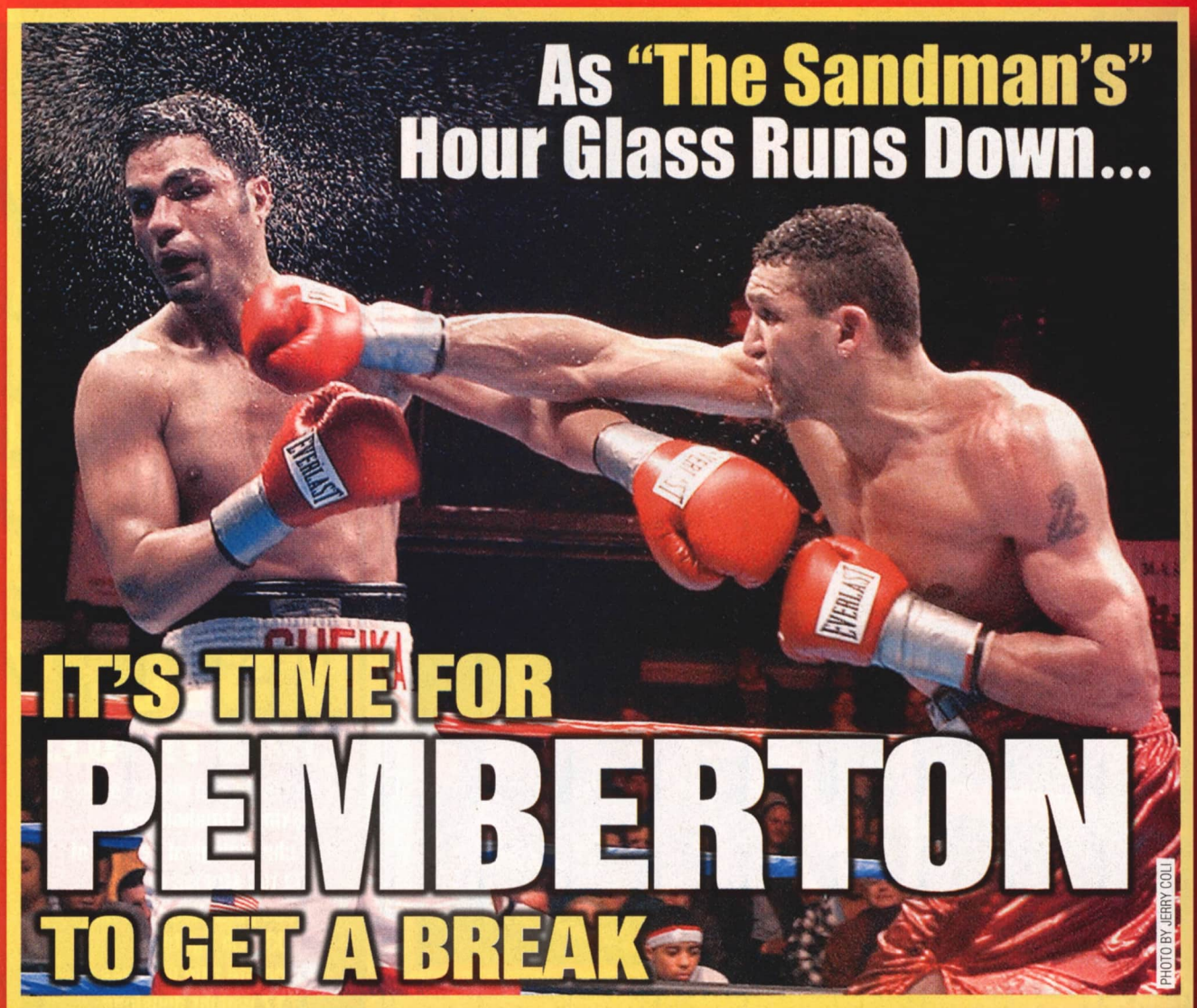

By Ted Bodenrader

The doors were closing, and closing fast.

The steel gates had just been slammed shut in his face, and Scott Pemberton sat alone in the darkness of the Wyatt Detention Center, the precious time closing in on his ambitions and his dreams. For every moment of the eight months and 23 days that followed, the struggling boxer peered through bars two inches thick and thought about only one thing: busting out.

Not that life on the inside was so bad for the Dartmouth, Massachusetts, native. In here, at least they knew his name. But for "The Sandman," a prisoner of boxing obscurity in his mid-30s, this conviction felt like nothing less than a death sentence.

"When I went away, I thought that that was the end of boxing," Pemberton said of the April 2001 conviction. "That's what I thought about every day I was in there. All the hard work I put into this boxing thing, it was a done deal. At my age, it was over before it really got started."

As a professional fistfighter, Pemberton had long been confined to a quiet anonymity. For years, he fought four, six, and eight-rounders underneath up-and-comers from all around New England, and was considered little more than a local nobody. These thoughts, these labels he contended with, they ate away at him. Because inside his slender, 6'2" frame, he knew there lived a warrior just itching to break free.

Pemberton's long-awaited chance to smash these barriers was finally coming, however. He was scheduled to fight highly rated Thomas Tate, and a victory would catapult Pemberton's career to the next level. At least that was the plan. But then a judge's gavel came crashing down on him one spring day, signaling the start of his incarceration just two weeks shy of the scheduled showdown with Tate.

As he was introduced to his new home, a place built of thick concrete walls and barbed wire, Pemberton obsessed daily over the prospect of a second chance.

On January 9, 2002, the day he walked out the front door of the Wyatt Detention Center as a 35-year-old man, he knew there was but one thing to do.

"I knew I had to break out of this," he said. "I knew I had to make my move. I couldn't wait to get my ass back in the

ring, working again. I just never thought I'd get another opportunity like the Tate fight. And never in a million years did I think I'd be in the position I'm in now."

The position Pemberton speaks of is high atop the super middleweight division, where today, he has established himself not as the 168-pound champion, but as something perhaps more meaningful. He has emerged as the division's—and one of the sport's—must-see attractions, a two-fisted slugger worth passing up a night at the barroom or horse track to see.

In his last four fights, Pemberton has produced three bona fide pulse-pounders, including back-to-back victories over Omar Sheika, the latest being a spectacular 10th-round TKO and an early Fight of the Year candidate.

A U.S. Army veteran, Pemberton has emerged in recent months as a hardened ring general, his fists made for fighting and his heart seasoned for combat. Yet, his skills are just modest enough that a touch of vulnerability seeps through, providing the type of theatrics that fight fans lust.

One moment, he's out on his feet. The next, he's knocking you off of yours. He's a super middleweight Micky Ward of sorts, a rare adrenaline shot in a division long famished for one.

"There ain't a lot of guys left in the sport that fight like Scottie," said Jimmy Burchfield, his Providence, Rhode Island-based promoter. "He's got that big, big heart, so you can never count him out. He's also got one of the best right hands in the division, so he's a threat to whoever he's in there with. He kind of reminds me of a Marvin Hagler or a Bernard Hopkins."

That's a stretch, although one thing Pemberton has in common with the former and present middleweight kings is that hard work and desire are enabling him to get the most out of his talents. And, like Hopkins, he's doing some of his best work in his late-30s.

Pemberton was never supposed to become a somebody in boxing. His amateur experience was amassed in barrooms all throughout southern New England. The shots he took in these saloons and taverns were not always through a glass. More often, they involved his fists.

His knack for smack spilled over into the prize ring, as Pemberton piled up an impressive run over thugs from the Greater Providence area. But in the super middleweight division, it was easy to be overlooked, especially when all eyes were glued to guys named Dana Rosenblatt and Vinny Pazienza, who were engaged in their headline-grabbing feud throughout the late-'90s.

"I always felt overshadowed by that," Pemberton admitted. "I always thought I could have knocked Rosenblatt on his ass, if I was ever given the chance."

But Pemberton wasn't, and in order to pay the bills, he dabbled in all kinds of manual labor jobs, long-hour gigs that involved ladders, hammers, or shovels of some sort. Struggling to support a son he fathered back in 1991, poverty had become the toughest nemesis in his troubled life.

"I couldn't afford anything," he admitted. "I could never pay the bills. I couldn't afford a house. I always had to hitch a ride

PHOTO BY JERRY COLI

Sweat sprays from Omar Sheika's head as he absorbs a left hook while trying to score with a hook of his own. Both of the Pemberton-Sheika fights featured sensational two-way action, powerpunching galore, and a minimal amount of defense.

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

In the second round, Sheika floored Pemberton with a left hook, but The Sandman got up and finished the round—just as he had when floored in the second round of their first fight. Pemberton also received an eight-count in the sixth round of the rematch when the ropes kept him from touching down, but he battled back yet again.

to the gym or take a bus because I had no car."

While Pemberton took on a variety of jobs to make ends meet, not all were of the honest type. In particular, he moonlighted as an enforcer for a local drug lord, collecting debts a la Rocky Balboa.

Meanwhile, after Pemberton opened some eyes with a surprise stoppage of Glenwood Brown in June 2000, Burchfield had big plans for his man on the rise. 2001 was going to be a grand year, and first up on the calendar was Tate.

But few knew that The Sandman was standing in quicksand. He was arrested and jailed on April 17 that year, charged by the FBI with extortion and conspiracy for his involvement with a major narcotics operation.

But losing the Tate fight wasn't the worst blow Pemberton sustained; his lowest moment came a month into his stay in prison. With his bank account at subzero, his girlfriend Margaret (now his fiancee) gave birth to daughter Rylie without Pemberton at her side.

While the agony ripped through Pemberton like a chainsaw, it also jumpstarted his post-prison plans.

"After that, I was more determined than ever," said Pemberton. "I couldn't wait to get out. One day, the judge called me in and decided I had had enough. And he let me go. As soon as I walked out of jail, I told myself that I would do everything possible to make it in boxing."

Pemberton departed through the prison gates that winter day to make good on his self-promise. But his wallet was empty. His baby was hungry. And the future that lay ahead was suddenly lost in limbo.

Burchfield, every bit a father figure as a promoter, would then serve a third role in Pemberton's life: his savior. When Burchfield staged a small fundraiser at a Providence eatery that winter, the proceeds were enough to help Pemberton get back on his feet, allowing him to focus solely on the mission ahead.

That's exactly what Pemberton did, as he wiped out Lloyd Bryan and Wendall Hall in less than three rounds apiece, setting up a moment-of-truth meeting with former titleholder and rated contender Charles Brewer. The August 2002 duel was Pemberton's first big opportunity to shine, as ESPN2 presented it as its *Friday Night Fights* headliner.

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

Sheika walks into a straight left from Pemberton. Sheika's chin was thought to be one of boxing's best coming into the fight, but Pemberton hurt him on several occasions and floored Sheika for the first time in his career in round 10.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Before the Sheika wars, Pemberton came up short in a 2002 Fight of the Year runner-up against top-10 super middle Charles Brewer. As usual, Pemberton took a count in round two, but hurt Brewer in rounds three, four, and five before getting stopped in the sixth.

What Pemberton found out about himself in the sixth-round TKO defeat was the same thing the rest of us did. His fists could do more than just maim. They could entertain. The wild slugfest, in which Pemberton escaped a second-round spanking and returned one over the next three rounds before Brewer rallied to stop him, raised more than a few eyebrows at ESPN headquarters.

Despite the eventual defeat, the network's powers-that-be, after seeing Pemberton get back in the win column with a TKO of Levan Easley, were quick to okay a proposed scrap with Omar Sheika—and they were sure glad they did. Pemberton-Sheika turned out to be ESPN's 2003 Fight of the Year, a classic fracas in which skill and tactics took a backseat to grit and attrition. Pemberton was floored in the second round and nearly kayoed in the 11th, but he outhustled slugger Sheika enough in between to prevail.

But to Pemberton, the majority decision victory he snagged was really just an afterthought. More important was the knowledge that the network executives couldn't wait to line up a rematch and the Connecticut casinos were grappling over the chance to stage it.

"My phone was ringing off the hook after that," recalled Burchfield. "Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, they were fighting like hell over it."

Foxwoods won the tug-of-war, and Pemberton-Sheika II turned out to be the very same thing, a thrilling replica of its predecessor, but with an extra dose of drama and action. As in the first fight, Pemberton was served a second-round helping of canvas blue, and again, climbed off the deck to introduce Sheika, 11 years his junior, to an impending world of hurt.

The back-and-forth battle was a nail-biter right up to its spectacular finish, when Pemberton rattled eight straight shots through Sheika's guard, introducing him to the first horizontal posture of his

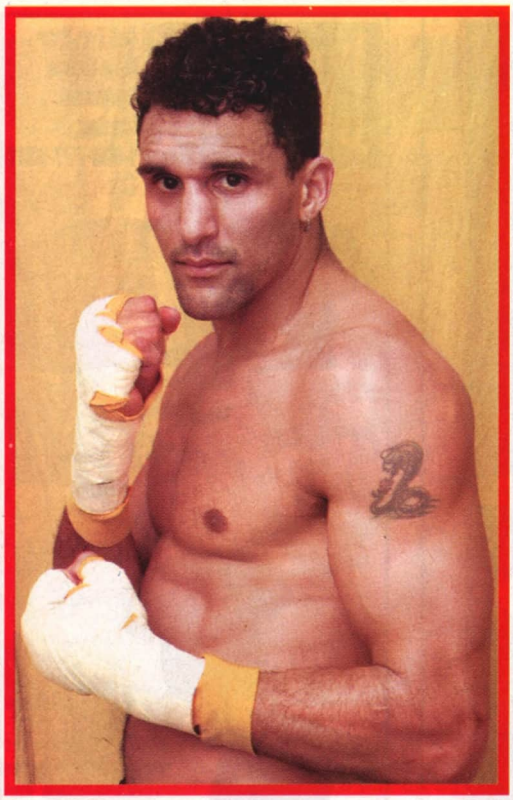

PHOTO BY JERRY COLI

At age 37, Pemberton doesn't have time to mess around, and badly wants a big-money fight before it's too late. While he's floated about the names of long-reigning titlists like Sven Ottke and Joe Calzaghe, a rematch with Brewer might be the best way to draw HBO or Showtime's interest.

professional career. Our palpitations finally subsided at 1:43 of the 10th, when Pemberton cracked home a final right hand, the last one that referee Gary Rosato cared to see.

"I'm not saying this because I promoted it," said Burchfield, "but that fight had every bit of excitement as the three Arturo Gatti-Micky Ward fights. The only difference is that Gatti and Ward made money. Those fights weren't any better than this one was. I firmly believe that."

So did the sellout crowd, as it turned the Fox Theater into the liveliest joint in Connecticut. As Pemberton's arm was triumphantly raised into the air, Burchfield scanned the premises and took in all its familiar faces.

"When Scottie first got out of jail, and I threw that fundraiser for him, I can't tell you how many people approached me about that," he recalled. "They wanted to know why I was wasting my time with such a nobody. When I was standing in the ring after that fight and looking around at some of those same faces, that's exactly what I was thinking about."

Pemberton, however, had 20,000 other thoughts in mind. The career-high $20,000 he pocketed would pay off a lot of utility bills, not to mention help with a down payment on a new home. At least that's what Pemberton was initially thinking. But by the time the government, the IBU (which sanctioned the fight), and his handlers took their respective chunks, Pemberton was again scrambling for loose change. Today, he still yearns for that payday that will free him from a lifetime of financial frustration.

"If I ever get a nice payday, the first thing I'll do is buy a house," Pemberton said. "That's always been the plan. But if I were to ever make it big—I mean, real big—I'd get a place on the ocean. And I'd be driving around in one of those Porsche SUVs."

Burchfield, meanwhile, has been working to provide that very thing, consulting daily with matchmakers and HBO executives and anyone else who may crave a piece of the Pemberton pie.

"We're looking at a lot of different things, but right now Sven Ottke is the one we want," said Burchfield of the German who has held the IBF title for 5½ years. "Foxwoods would love it, Mohegan Sun would love it, HBO says they're interested. It's just a matter of getting it done."

"I'd love to fight Ottke," said Pemberton, "but I just don't know how much I'd make on it. I'm kind of in a tough spot. All the top guys in the division, none of them are Americans. Ottke is from Germany, [Joe] Calzaghe is from Wales, [Eric] Lucas is Canadian. They're not big-money guys. On the other hand, if somebody wants to pay me to move up to light heavyweight and let Roy Jones pound the hell out of me, I'm all over it. I know I'd make some money."

Pemberton, however, doesn't need to cruise the scales to find his true calling in this game. His niche is right at 168, where he's emerged as the division's hottest sure-fire entertainer.

At 37, he understands there may be no other role left for him.

"There ain't a lot of time," he admitted. "My hands are starting to bother me a lot; I don't have a lot of years left with them. And I really don't know if I'll ever get that big, big shot."

So for now, Pemberton still rents a three-bedroom apartment in rural Dartmouth, and struggles daily to provide it with heat, electricity, and hot water. But this impoverished lifestyle is no longer a constant jab at Pemberton's ribs. In the past six

PHOTO BY JERRY COLI

Pemberton's hard work in the gym is finally paying off. He's drawn some comparisons recently to fellow New England warrior Micky Ward, whose heart, determination, and dedication saw him through to the type of late-career paydays Pemberton covets.

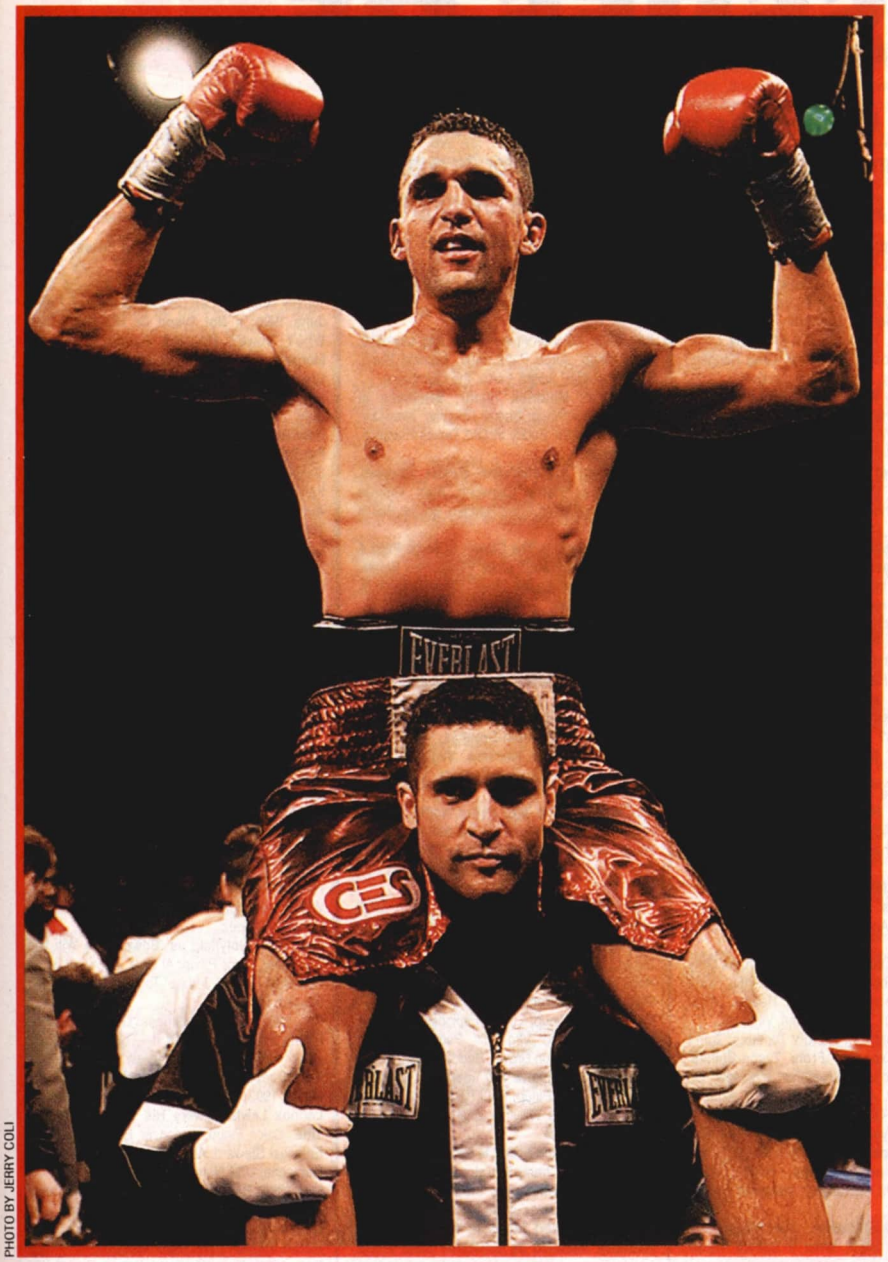

PHOTO BY JERRY COLI

Pemberton celebrates his 10th-round kayo of Sheika, certainly the best win of The Sandman's career thus far. The back-to-back triumphs over Sheika also arguably established Pemberton as the most exciting fighter in the super middleweight division.

months, he has busted out of his own, personal penitentiary, that dark and lonely place that once constrained him to a grueling life sentence.

Today, the only manual labor Pemberton conducts is of the fistic variety, and the only pennies he pockets are earned the honest way.

"I've cleaned myself up," he said. "I don't do any of that [illegal] stuff no more. It ain't worth it.

"Other than that, I really haven't changed much. I'm still the same old Scott, your everyday next-door neighbor. And I'm still broke, broke as hell. I can barely pay my phone bill. Time hasn't really changed that."

As the time continues to close in on his career like a steel prison gate, Pemberton may never know what it's like to wear a championship belt or to drive a Porsche SUV to his very own beachside flat. Yet, even in poverty, there's one feeling nobody can ever take from Scott Pemberton again.

The warrior inside him will forever be free. ■

Ted Bodenrader is a freelance writer from the Boston area and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue. Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, best fighter poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson—The Only Heavyweight That Matters. Color Pinup: Thomas Hearns. Interview: Troy Dorsey. Also: Fenech-Nelson, James Toney, bodypunching.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

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June 1996: Destined For The Hall Of Fame: Who's In, Who's Out. Color Pinup: Wayne McCullough. Interview: Cedric Kushner. Also: Danny Romero, Mark Breland, Dynamite Dozen—the next 12.

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Feb. 1997: *KO*'s 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

March 1997: Holyfield's Trainer Tells All! An Inside Look At The Upset Of The Year. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: George Foreman, Lupe Pintor, boxing bill, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

Sept. 1997: A Legitimate Grudge Match! Why Romero-Tapia Could Be The Fight Of The Year. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: David Tua. Also: Ike Quartey, George Foreman, top promoters.

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Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

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Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

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JAMES J. BRADDOCK

70 Years Later, His Cinderella Story Is Worth Crowing About

By Robert Cassidy

When the stock market crashed in 1929, it impacted the lives of millions of Americans. The ensuing Depression destroyed businesses, devastated families, and, for several years, altered the American dream. During that time it was not so much the land of opportunity, but rather a land in which the primary objective was survival.

Yet out of that adversity emerged men and women who would climb back to their feet and continue to fight to restore all that had been lost. One of them would ascend to the throne of heavyweight champion.

This is the story of a hungry fighter, both figuratively and literally. There were nights James J. Braddock fought simply to secure his next meal. But he kept fighting. It is also the story of a man who endured the humiliation of applying for financial relief just to feed his family. But he kept fighting. And because he kept fighting, even when the boxing industry had given up on him, Braddock went on to win the biggest prize in boxing.

It took almost 70 years after Braddock went from accepting public relief to the pinnacle of his sport, but Hollywood has finally bought into the Braddock story. The film *Cinderella Man*, directed by Ron Howard, was scheduled to begin shooting in April and will star Russell Crowe in the role of Braddock and Rene Zellweger as his wife, Mae.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Actor Russell Crowe, pictured with actress Nicole Kidman, does research for his role as Braddock in an upcoming movie by observing ringside at the Anthony Mundine-Yoshinori Nishizawa bout in Crowe's native Australia.

"It's really a great story," said author Jack Newfield, who is working as a consultant on the film. "This is a guy who was

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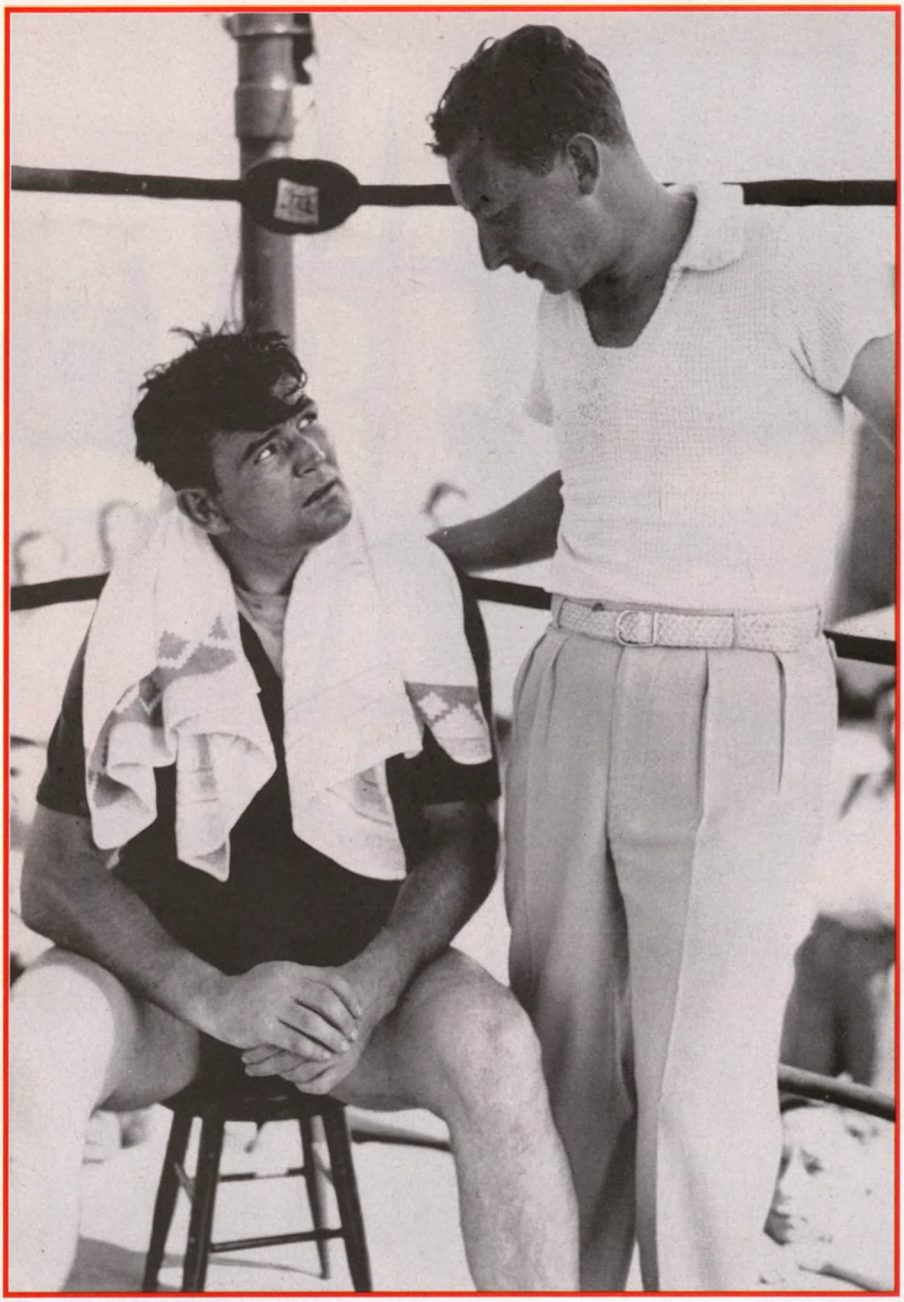


Braddock, who turned pro in 1926, struggled to get meaningful fights until he teamed up with manager Joe Gould in 1928. Gould would eventually help Braddock get shots at both the light heavyweight and heavyweight titles, the former ending in a decision loss to the great Tommy Loughran.

down on his luck, he had bad hands, a losing record for a few years, but he goes on to win the heavyweight title."

Newfield likens the story to another Depression-era sports hero—Seabiscuit. The movie of the underdog racehorse was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Much like Seabiscuit, Braddock emerged as a hero to the common man during a time when the downtrodden and the desperate were seeking any signs of hope.

Braddock was born on June 7, 1905, in the Manhattan neighborhood known as Hell's Kitchen, a predominantly Irish enclave on the city's West Side. As a child, his family moved to West New York, New Jersey, and Braddock remained in that area most of his life.

Braddock quit school at the age of 14 and within three years began following an older brother to a nearby boxing gym. As an amateur, Braddock simultaneously won the New Jersey state light heavyweight and heavyweight titles, but after three years competing for trophies and wristwatches, he turned pro in 1926.

Braddock often trained at the North Bergen Social and Athletic Club, a men's establishment that had a bar, a pool room, and a boxing gym equipped with one ring and two heavybags. Charlie Gellman, a preliminary fighter of that era, also worked out at the club.

"The North Bergen Social and Athletic Club was a place anyone could go and workout," said Gellman, now 87 and a resident of Valley Stream, New York. "Sometimes the bartender would come in the back and spar with us. But we had a group of young fighters there that included Gus Lesnevich and Al Ridgeway, who fought Kid Chocolate. They had athletic mats on the floor because in those days the fighters would wrestle each other to gain strength. I sparred and wrestled with Braddock back then. I'd go the full three rounds with him and give him a good workout. He was taller and bigger than I was. Sometimes he'd pull his punches and sometimes he didn't. But I worked with him pretty well.

"Then, little by little, Jim started making a name for himself. He was a light heavyweight at first, and the big fight he had was against Tuffy Griffith. Griffith was unbeaten and everyone was calling him the next Jack Dempsey. Braddock dropped him quite a few times and stopped him in the second round."

As Braddock began to progress, he started working out at Joe Jeanette's Gym in Hoboken, New Jersey. That is where he met manager Joe Gould, and suddenly his career began to accelerate. In 1928, Braddock beat Pete Latzo and Griffith, and the following year he stopped future 175-pound champion Jimmy Slattery. The success led to a title fight at Yankee Stadium against Tommy Loughran. Braddock may have been young, strong, and aggressive, but he was no match for the legendary champion. Loughran relied on a steady jab, easily outboxing Braddock and winning 13 of the 15 rounds.

In the middle of the fight, Braddock

Braddock displays his lucky rabbit's foot and horseshoe prior to his title fight with Max Baer in 1935. They wouldn't allow Braddock to put the horseshoe in his glove, but a savvy fight plan and a good left jab got the job done for the 10-1 underdog.

have three small children. Braddock, like most everyone else in the country, was soon looking for work.

Gellman, who fought on some of Braddock's undercards, remembers shaping up with him on the docks. They were told that if they placed a toothpick in their mouths, the foreman would recognize they had connections at the dock and he would give them work. It was hard work, while it lasted.

Braddock often worked eight-hour days unloading railroad ties from the holds of ships and moving them onto flatbed railroad cars. Then, if he was lucky, he'd fol-

returned to his corner and asked manager Joe Gould, "How am I doing?"

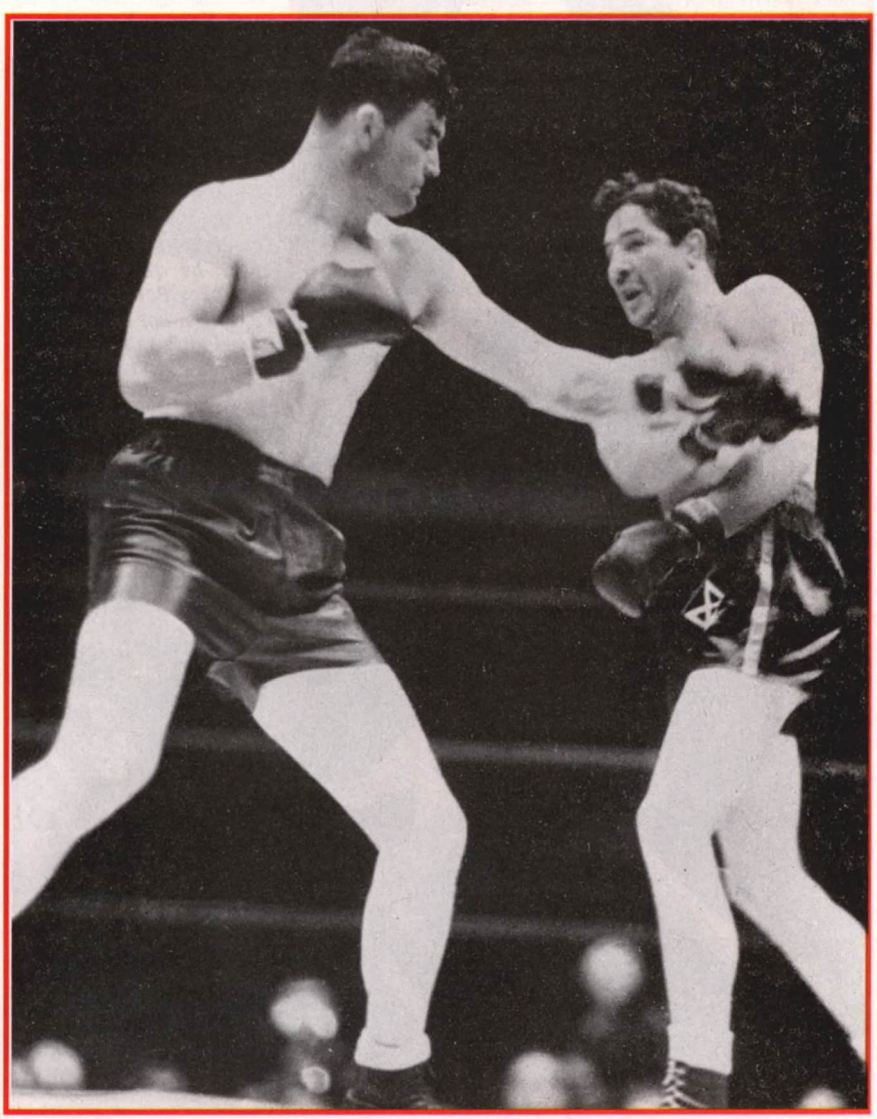
"Not so good," said the manager. "You gotta stop some of those left hands."

Braddock replied: "Do you see any of them getting by me?"

And while the fighter always managed to keep his sense of humor, the loss sent his career into a tailspin. Braddock followed the Loughran fight with a decision loss to Yale Okun three weeks later, and would also lose to Maxie Rosenbloom before the year ended. Braddock's confidence had been shattered.

The one thing that Braddock managed to do right during this time was utilize the purses he earned for the Loughran, Okun, and Rosenbloom fights. He invested in the stock market, bought a fleet of taxicabs, and still managed to put aside almost $20,000 in savings.

But the day the stock market crashed—October 29, 1929—the world changed. Black Friday didn't pull any punches. Braddock's stocks disappeared, the taxi company went bankrupt, and the savings account was soon depleted. Braddock married the former Mae Fox in 1930, and within the next few years the couple would



Remembering how effective Tommy Loughran had been utilizing his left jab against Baer, Braddock decided to do likewise, and jabbed his way to the heavyweight championship. After the huge upset, writer Damon Runyon christened Braddock "The Cinderella Man."

low that by working from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. unloading coal for 60 cents an hour. In the winter of 1933-'34, work became so scarce Braddock was forced to apply for relief from the state of New Jersey. His family was issued $24 a month, which was just enough to buy groceries and pay for gas and electricity.

With little time to train and a good meal hard to come by, Braddock's boxing career continued its descent. From January 1930 to May '33, he lost 16 times.

"Sure Jimmy had problems during the depression," said Gellman. "Everybody did. He fought to make a living, but he was on the WPA [Work Project Administration]. The WPA gave people jobs on government projects. All the fighters had jobs then. The iceman was a fighter, the ferryboat operator was a fighter, and they'd fight once a week in addition to their jobs. People today don't understand how hard it was to get by during that time."

Braddock bottomed out when he fought Abe Feldman in 1933. By then Braddock had a history of hand problems and entered the fight with sore right hand. He broke the hand in round three and began to adopt a defensive posture. Feldman, unaware that Braddock was injured, also fought cautiously. Finally, the referee stopped the fight due to the lack of aggression on the part of both fighters and ruled it a no-contest after six rounds. The New York State Athletic Commission withheld Braddock's purse of $300.

At the time, Braddock didn't have much going for him, but as a former contender and main event fighter, he remained an attractive opponent for a young fighter looking for a steppingstone. Gould managed to secure Braddock a six-round fight against the highly touted Corn Griffin on the undercard of the Max Baer-Primo Carnera fight. Although he was dropped in the first round, Braddock rallied and battered Griffin, scoring four knockdowns en route to a third-round TKO.

After the bout, he told his manager, "I did that on hash. Get me a couple of steaks and there's no telling what I'll do."

What Braddock did was post back-to-back wins over the highly rated John Henry Lewis and Art Lasky. After he earned $4,100 for the Lasky bout, he sent a check to the New Jersey state relief agency, paying back the entire amount he and his family received.

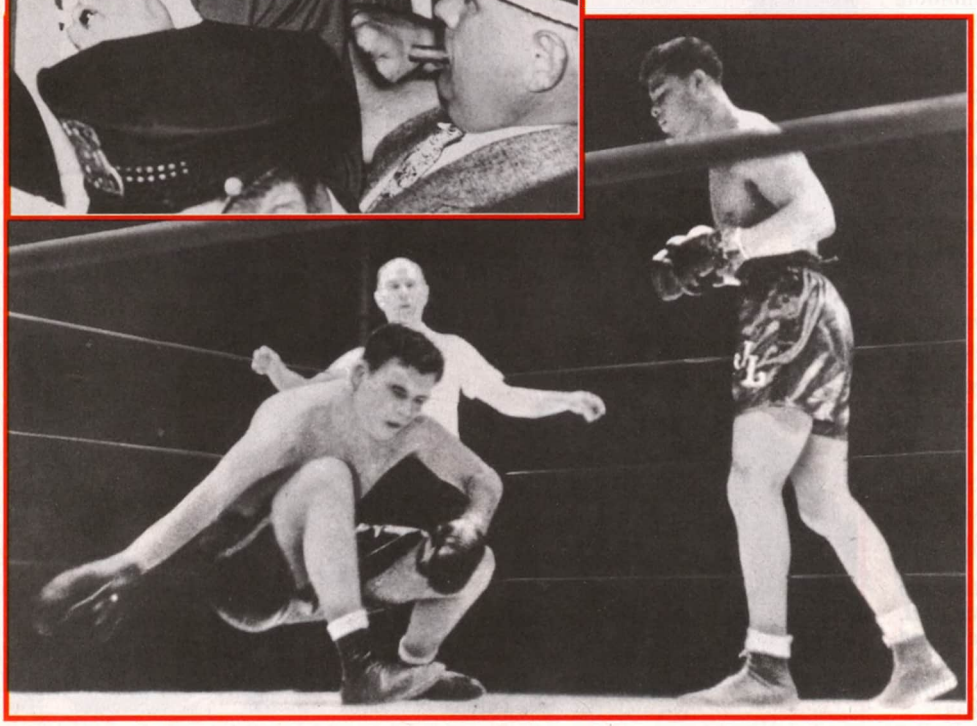
On June 13, 1935, 364 days after leaving public assistance, Braddock challenged Max Baer for the heavyweight title at Madison Square Garden Bowl in Long Island City. Baer was a devastating puncher and listed as a 10-1 favorite. Braddock, who had always been known as a slow, plodding fighter who simply looked to score with his right hand, changed his strategy for the fight of his life.

"I noticed how Loughran used that left hand [against Baer] the same way he'd done it to me," said Braddock in a *New York Times* article. "When I boxed Baer, I kept sticking him like Loughran did. So one loss made me a winner."

Indeed. Braddock kept Baer off-balance for 15 rounds by constantly out-jabbing the defending champion. And when Baer attempted to mount an attack, Braddock would slam home counter right hands. The result was a unanimous decision victory for Braddock. At the age of 35, he had become the heavyweight champion of the world.

"The fistic fairy tale comes true. James J. Braddock of New Jersey, 'The Cinderella Man' of pugilism, is the new heavyweight champion," wrote Damon Runyon after the bout, coining the nickname that was forever after attached to Braddock.

Braddock's reign as champion was brief. On June 22, 1937, he fought Joe Louis in his first



Braddock lost the heavyweight title to Joe Louis in his first defense via eighth-round knockout (below). Later he left Chicago's Comiskey Park covered in bandages, but secure in the knowledge that he would share in Louis' future purses.

and only title defense. Although he dropped Louis early in the fight, Braddock suffered a tremendous beating and was counted out in the eighth round.

"I think it was a wonderful thing that he didn't draw the color line," said Newfield. "There hadn't been a black heavyweight champion since Jack Johnson. And Braddock knew that he would lose the fight to Louis. But he was an unusually decent, nice man."

Braddock's decency and friendly demeanor have become as much a part of his legacy as his against-all-odds march to the title.

"I knew Jimmy Braddock all my life," said Gellman. "We grew up together. He never had a bad word to say about anybody. This is the kind of guy Braddock was: I had a fight at the West New York Playgrounds and I didn't have any boxing shoes. Someone told me to go over to Braddock's house and see if he would lend me a pair. He lived on Hudson Boulevard; it wasn't too far. I went to his house, and he gave me his pair of boxing shoes, but they were too big. So he took some newspaper and stuffed it into the tip of the shoes so they would fit. And that's what I boxed in that night."

After the Louis fight, Braddock decisioned Tommy Farr and then retired in 1938 with an overall record of 46-23-4 (27) with 11 no-decisions and 2 no-contests. He managed fighters with Gould for a number of years, but lived comfortably as a result of a deal Gould negotiated before the Louis fight. The result of the Louis-Braddock fight was nearly a foregone conclusion, so before agreeing to the fight, Gould secured 10 percent of Louis' future earnings from promoter Mike Jacobs. Many believed that Braddock's money came directly from Louis' purse, but that's incorrect. Braddock and Gould were paid out of Jacobs' share of the promotion.

Despite the money he got from Louis' defenses and several business ventures, Braddock was eventually forced to go back to work on the New Jersey waterfront where he'd originally toiled as a young man. He died in 1974 at the age of 68.

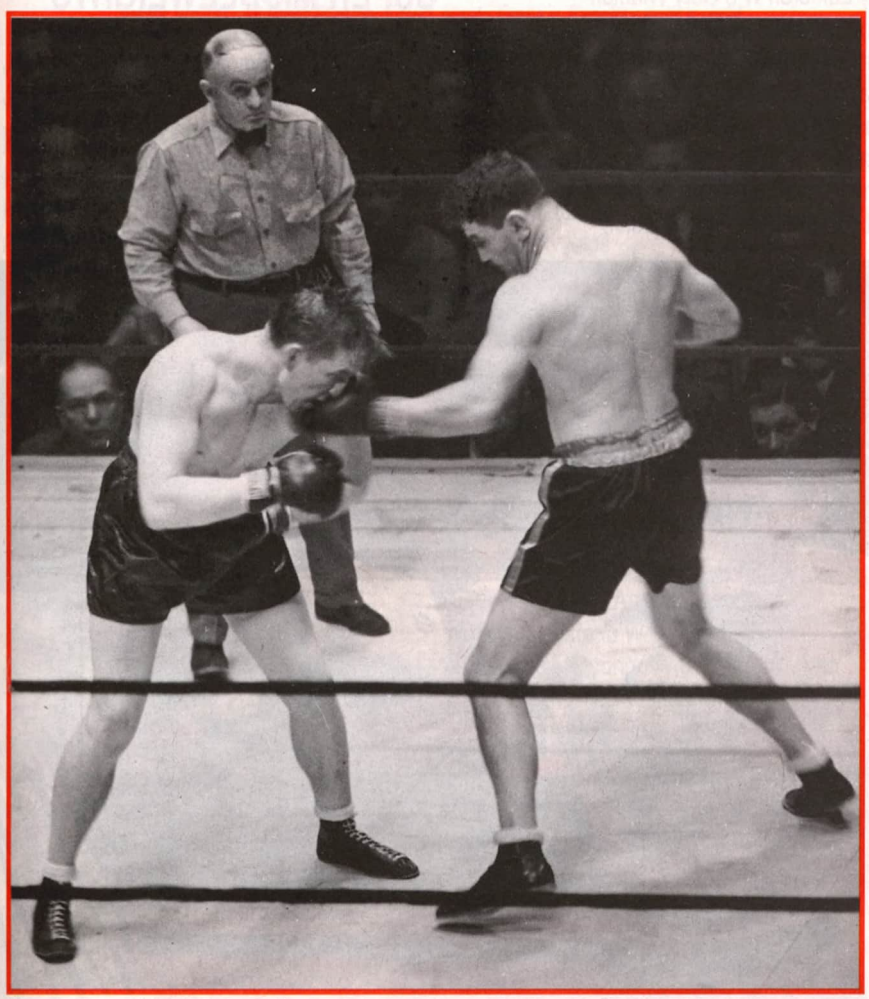
When the money from Louis' career finally stopped coming in, Braddock embarked on several other business ventures. He owned and operated a bar and grill near the old Madison Square Garden, and later owned a marine supplies company with several partners.

Ultimately, though, Braddock wound up back on the New Jersey piers. Up until the age of at least 64, he was operating cranes and other heavy equipment for a private contracting company as well as the longshoreman's union. He died of natural causes at the age of 68 in the same North Bergen home in which he lived after defeating Baer.

Near the end of his life, Braddock was asked about his return to the docks. "Actually, I'm lucky," he said. "I'm still strong and healthy. I'm able to put in a full day's work and I do a good job of it. Besides, I like to work. Always did. I'm not looking for any sympathy."

Braddock never did look for sympathy. It seems all he wanted out of life was a chance to keep fighting. ■

Robert Cassidy is a former associate editor of this magazine and a regular contributor.



In his farewell fight, Braddock sprung another upset by outpointing Welshman Tommy Farr at Madison Square Garden on January 21, 1938. Farr had given Louis a tough fight over 15 rounds in his previous start and was expected to beat Braddock, but couldn't get past the ex-champ's educated left hand.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Eliecer Castillo KO 1 Uriah Grant
Michael Moorer KO 7 Jose Da Silva
DaVarryl Williamson KO 9 Kendrick Releford
Michael Sprott W 12 Danny Williams
Ramon Garbey W 12 Jermell Barnes
Dennis Bakhtov W 12 Keith Long
Matt Skelton W 10 Julius Francis
Nicolay Popov W 8 Corey Sanders
Samuel Peter KO 7 Chris Isaac
Wladimir Virchis KO 8 Balu Sauer
Albert Sosnowski KO 2 Greg Scott-Briggs
Eliseo Castillo W 4 Onebo Maxime
George Linberger KO 4 Kevin Tallon
Wesley Martin W 10 Shane Sutcliffe
Marvin Hunt W 4 Ray Lunsford
Billy Zumbrun W 8 Gary Winmon
Paolo Vidoz W 8 Serguej Dychkov
Sultan Ibragimov KO 1 Petr Sapun
Chad Butler KO 3 Julius Bishop
Preston Hartzog W 4 Troy Roberts
Brian Minto KO 2 Jed Phipps
John Poore KO 6 Paul Paczynski
B.J. Flores KO 1 Chris Hairston

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Carl Thompson KO 9 Sebastian Rothman
Daniel Judah KO 5 Tiwon Taylor
Sajjad Abdul Aziz W 8 Leeonzer Barber

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Glencoffe Johnson W 12 Clinton Woods *(Wins Vacant IBF Title)*
Zsolt Erdei W 12 Julio Gonzalez
Julian Letterlough KO 5 Tony Menefee
Glen Kelly KO 6 Luis Ricall
Manuel Ntoh KO 2 Jose Spearman
Prince Badi Ajamu KO 4 Ray Berry
Troy Weaver KO 2 Jose Hilton Santos
Sam Reese W 8 Aneudi Santos
Allan Green KO 2 Joe Pastorello

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Anthony Mundine KO 5 Yoshinori Nishizawa
Scott Pemberton KO 10 Omar Sheika
Tito Mendoza KO 3 Etienne Whitaker
Richard Grant KO 6 David Hamilton
Jameel Wilson KO 7 Patrick Perez
Carl Froch KO 2 Dmitry Adamovich

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Sharmba Mitchell eats a right hand while landing a left to Lovemore Ndou's body

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLKHBO

Junior welter prospect Dimitry Salita blasts Frankie Sanchez with a right

Jerson Ravelo KO 5 Jason Dietrich
James McGirt W 4 James North

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Howard Eastman W 12 Sergey Tatevosyan
Raymond Joval Tech. Win 8
Angel Hernandez
Epifanio Mendoza KO 8 Rito Ruvalcaba
Sam Soliman KO 1 Juan Carlos Letteri
Cristian Sanavia W 8 Mike Algoet
Wayne Alexander KO 2 Howard Clarke
Eugenio Montero W 8 Takaloo
Alexey Chirkov W 10 Julio Cesar Vasquez
Grady Brewer W 8 Miguel Martin
Cleveland Corder KO 8 Ron Johnson
Troy Rowland KO 1 Terry Tock
Kelly Pavlik W 8 Anthony Ivory
Wayne Elcock W 6 Farai Musiiwa
Rasheem Brown KO 3 Shakir Ashanti
Jesus Gonzales KO 4 Vincent Moses

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Ray Oliveira KO 5 Jerry Smith
Richard Williams KO 7 Ayittey Powers
Kermit Cintron KO 5 Humberto Aranda
Mihaly Kotai W 12 Monney Seka
Matt Vanda W 10 Sam Garr
Sergej Dzinziruk KO 5 Andrei Pestriaev
Eddie Pireh W 10 Pat Coleman
Peter Manfredo KO 6 Sherwin Davis
William Gare W 10 Virgil Kalakoda
Aslanbek Kodzoev W 10 Marcos Primera
Giorbis Barthelemy W 8 Vincent Harris
Reggie Davis W 10 Dewey Welliver
Paul Williams KO 4 Rodolfo Gomez
Anthony Thompson KO 5 Anthony Bowman
Yuri Foreman W 6 Anthony Ivory

WELTERWEIGHTS

Antonio Margarito KO 2
Hercules Kyvelos
Thomas Damgaard KO 2 Luiz Da Silva
Francisco Bojado W 10 Emmanuel Clottey
Ishe Smith W 12 Randall Bailey
Shingo Eguchi KO 1 Purim Tontiu
Tadashi Yuba KO 2 Sokkeun Nah
Nurhan Suleyman W 12 Jesus Soto
Ian MacKillop KO 7 Ramon Olivas
Luis Alberto Santiago W 8 Bernard Harris
Miguel Rodriguez KO 6 Ernesto Carmona
Scott De Pompe W 6 John Scalzi
Jose Ojeda KO 3 Arturo Barrazza
Donald Camarena W 8 Brad Jensen
Mohammed Kayongo W 6 Marteze Logan
Ruben Fuchu W 6 Joshua Smith
Enrique Lane W 4 Steve Aridola

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Lovemore Ndou
Arturo Gatti W 12 Gianluca Branco
Henry Bruseles KO 7 Wilfredo Negron
David Diaz W 8 Emmanuel Augustus
Arturo Morua W 12 Juan Antonio Lopez
Rogelio Castaneda W 10 Miguel Figueroa
Antonio Pitalua KO 3 Roberto Valenzuela
Andreas Kotelnik W 8 Juan Alberto Godoy
Ebo Elder KO 3 Tyrone Wiggins
Dimitry Salita W 6 Frankie Sanchez
Mia St. John W 4 Franchesca Alcanter
Mia St. John W 4 Ragan Pudwill

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Tontcho Tontchev KO 5 Francky Leroy
Kengo Nagashima W 10 Dennis Laurente
Danny Hunt W 10 Anthony Maynard
Daniel Jimenez KO 7
Alberto DeJesus Trinidad

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Yodsanan Nanthachai KO 7 Ryuhei Sugita
Randy Suico KO 2 Seungwon Baek
Boris Sinitsin W 12 Joao Antonio Bento
Shamir Reyes W 10 Ivan Valle
Vicente Mosquera W 10 Ali Oubaali
Gary St. Clair W 6 John Shiffraw
Leonardo Resendiz W 12 Cesar Soriano
Carl Johaneson KO 5 Harold Grey
Koba Gogaladze KO 2 Juan Garza
Koba Gogaladze W 6 Juan Polo Perez

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Jorge Lacierva KO 3 Marinho Gonzalez
Vuyani Bungu W 12 Takalani Ndlovu
Alvin Brown W 12 Mark Burse
Erik Rodriguez Tech. Win 4
Francisco Tejedor
Marcos Ramirez KO 1 Mike Juarez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Rikiya Fukuhara KO 8 Eugenio Gomez
Esham Pickering KO 10 Vincenzo Gigliotti
Jimrex Jaca W 12 Pedrito Laurente
Jun Toriumi KO 9 Sornpichai Singwangcha
Jorge Linares W 10 Hugo Soto
Debind Thapa KO 5 Margarito Lopez

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Rafael Marquez KO 2 Pete Frissina
(Retains IBF Title)
Armando Guerrero W 8 Francisco Tejedor
Daniel Ponce-DeLeon KO 1 Jesus Perez

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Fernando Montiel KO 3 Roberto Lopez
Martin Castillo W 12 Rogelio Galicia
Cesar Lopez W 10 Bryan Garcia
Masaki Kawabata W 10
Prosper Kohei Matsuura
Reynaldo Lopez D 10 Ramon Gamez

FLYWEIGHTS

Hiroshi Nakano Tech. Win 6 Koji Koyama
Ivan Hernandez W 8 Arturo Davalos

STRAWWEIGHTS

Juan Landaeta W 12 Chana Porpaoin
Satoshi Kogumazaka W 10
Hiroshi Matsumoto

EVERLAST
BOXING EQUIPMENT
EST.1910
BRONX, NEW YORK
PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

Just 11 professional bouts doesn't seem adequate preparation for upsetting a long-reigning titleholder, but that's all the experience Eagle Akakura needed to unseat Jose Aguirre, who was making his eighth defense of the WBC strawweight title.

PHOTO BY TORU YAMANAKA/GETTY IMAGES

Akakura, who turned pro in his native Thailand in January 2000, moved his base of operations to Tokyo in August '01, and soon found himself on the fast track to a title shot. In his most significant bout prior to Aguirre, he'd won a lopsided 10-round decision over veteran Noel Tunacao, but was still a big underdog going into the title fight.

Akakura, whose Thai name is Den Junpaphan, jumped on Aguirre from the start and never let the Mexican get into the fight, winning the belt via unanimous 12-round decision. It was the first major upset of 2004 and more than enough to earn Akakura both the number-two spot in THE RING's 105-pound rankings and Fighter of the Month honors.

• • • •

Eagle Akakura

RINGSIDE REPORTS

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Gatti cracks Branco with a right

Arturo Gatti W 12 Gianluca Branco

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Gatti was a solid favorite to defeat his virtually anonymous opponent in his first fight after the classic thrill-ogy with Micky Ward, yet reasons for concern abounded. First, there was the possibility that Gatti might finally be as used-up as we all assumed he would be by now, thanks to the 30 impossibly taxing rounds he shared with Ward. Second, there was the question of whether the boxing proficiency Gatti showed against Ward was only impressive in comparison with the one-dimensional approach of his rival, and would not necessarily prove effective if Branco turned out to be as capably skilled as his record and limited available fight footage suggested. And third, there was the right hand that Gatti had injured in each of his last two fights, and the uncertainty over whether he was superior enough to Branco to beat him with just one good paw if necessary.

The answers provided before a surprisingly large crowd of 11,237 at Boardwalk Hall were varied, but ultimately, "Thunder" offered just enough right answers to prevail. Fighting through another debilitating hand injury, Gatti remained true to his rediscovered boxing skills and, with the help of a critical late knockdown, did just enough to earn a unanimous decision win. It wasn't as thrilling as a typical Gatti fight, but it was never boring either.

Branco, 140, Italy, turned out to be a boxer but not a mover, showing good defense and looking to counterpunch while remaining fairly stationary. Gatti, 140, Jersey City, New Jersey, eked out several of the early rounds purely by being more offensive-minded than his opponent, but the first four stanzas were all close, and Branco seemed to win round two thanks to a series of clean right hands (though none of the official judges thought so). Two of the judges did correctly give Branco the fifth, although it was a Gatti punch that was most instrumental in the Italian enjoying a strong round: Early in the session, Gatti landed a right hand to Branco's hip and winced immediately, obviously having hurt the hand the same way he did in the rubber match with Ward.

"My hand hurts. Just thinking about it, it's getting me sick," a glum Gatti would tell the gathered press after the fight. "I always hurt something every fight I have. If it's not a swollen eye, it's a broken bone. It's always hard."

In this case, there was the bum hand *and* a swollen left eye, the result of Branco's accurate right cross. But Gatti, 31, soldiered on, relying primarily on his jab. He took a chance with the right hand in the seventh, but he paid for it immediately, his face full of anguish after another shot landed on Branco's hip. Moments later, Branco, 33, landed his best punch of the fight, a right hand that snapped the Jersey-based Canadian's head back.

Heading into the 10th, THE RING's scorecard was even, while two judges had it a one-point fight. But with one punch late in the round, the underdog's chances of winning all but vanished. Gatti's left hook, which has bailed him out so many times in the past, just barely beat a simultaneous hook from Branco, and connected with the Italian's jaw with explosive force. Down Branco went, and though he beat American referee Rudy Battle's count and survived the round, the damage on the scorecards was done.

Branco, 32-1-1 (15), fought back well in the 11th with more right hands, but Gatti controlled the final round, landing hook after hook to wrap up the victory. Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand) and Tom Kaczmarek (USA) both scored it 116-111, and Guido Cavallieri (Italy) had it 115-112. THE RING scored 115-113 for Gatti.

"Everybody looked at Gianluca Branco as an opponent, but he's a good fighter," said Gatti, 37-6 (28). "I thought I lost only two or three rounds. But it's never easy. My hand was really hurt, so I couldn't finish him off."

As it turned out, the hand wasn't broken. Gatti merely sprained his middle knuckle, and is hopeful that a bout with the all-action Leonard Dorin in Montreal can come off in June or July as planned.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Main Events
(1-24-04)
Eric Raskin

Francisco Bojado W 10 Emmanuel Clottey

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Remember "Panchito" Bojado, that teenaged terror who lit up the boxing world in 2001 with an endless parade of highlight-reel knockouts? Well, he's not a teenager anymore, and if his points win over Clottey on the Gatti-Branco undercard is any indication, he's not quite a terror either and he won't be lighting up the boxing world again anytime soon.

Maybe it's just the improved grade of opposition he's fighting, and certainly it was expected that stylistic changes would be made following Bojado's February '02 upset loss to Juan Carlos Rubio. But it still was a disappointment to see Panchito win his third consecutive ho-hum decision, especially when you consider that all three foes who took Bojado the full route had previous kayo losses on their records.

But Clottey was the sturdiest of the three, having been stopped only once, and having shocked prospect Muhammad Abdullaev via

10th-round knockout last June. So trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. sent the 20-year-old Bojado in with a game plan that called for him to box intelligently. The result was a close but clear-cut decision win that left most fans hungering for the old, aggressive Panchito.

2000 Mexican Olympian Bojado, 142, East Los Angeles, California, boxed smoothly in the opening round, scoring to the head and body while Clottey, 142, Doraville, Georgia, via Ghana, did little beyond showing a tight defense. Clottey stepped it up somewhat in the second, but Bojado's speed carried the third, while Clottey was warned twice by referee David Fields (USA) for low blows that didn't appear as low as the young Mexican-American complained they were. With two right hands early and a series of stiff jabs late, Clottey narrowly won the fourth, and the African ratcheted up the pressure in the fifth, making Bojado uncomfortable with a body assault along the ropes.

But just when it seemed Clottey might be taking over, he eased up ever so slightly, and didn't secure any of the last five rounds definitively. In fact, both THE RING and one of the three ringside judges gave rounds six through 10 all to Bojado. Round seven was the most entertaining of the fight, and Bojado's temporarily increased aggression served him well. The ninth had an ebb and flow to it as well, and all three judges agreed that Bojado's late attack overruled the mid-round stretch in which Clottey took advantage of the soft spots in the Mayweather-taught defense with several clean right hands.

When Bojado controlled the 10th with his quicker, sharper punches, there was little doubt that the decision would be his, but the crowd seemed opposed to the scoring margins. Luis Rivera (USA) had it 99-92, while Joe Pasquale (USA) and Paul Venti (USA) both scored it 97-93, the same as THE RING.

"I think I could have done better," said Bojado, 15-1 (11), giving himself a six on a scale of 1 to 10. "He was awkward the way he would come in with his head. These are the type of fighters I can get a lot of experience against."

The question is, can Bojado entertain and impress while acquiring that experience? The most important thing is to keep winning, but HBO dates like this will get much harder to come by if Bojado's fights continue to be this forgettable.

Promoter: Main Events

(1-24-04)

Eric Raskin

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Bojado plows a right into Clottey's face

PHOTO BY TORU YAMANAKA/GETTY IMAGES

Akakura wings a right at Aguirre en route to upset

Eagle Akakura W 12 Jose Aguirre

Tokyo, Japan: Scoring the first significant upset of the new year, little-known Japan-based Thailander Akakura upended long-reigning WBC strawweight king Aguirre via unanimous decision at Korakuen Hall. The Mexican was one month of shy of completing his fourth year as titleholder, but in his eighth defense, he came up against a determined challenger who was all over him from the outset.

Aguirre, 105, never got untracked, and after losing the first three rounds, his situation worsened when he was staggered by a combination in the fourth. Akakura, 105, made good use of his short, straight right and his quick left hook, doing enough to win all 12 rounds on one scorecard. Chuck Hassett (USA) scored it 120-107, while Lou Filippo (USA) had it 119-108 and Herbert Minn (USA) saw it 117-110.

"I just tried to do my best, because I thought I would never have a chance of fighting a world title match," said the 25-year-old Akakura, 12-0 (5).

"Luck was not with me at all today," said the 28-year-old Aguirre, 30-2-1 (19). "I couldn't get into my own rhythm until the end. I hope I will have a chance for a rematch as soon as possible."

The referee was Laurence Cole (USA).

(1-10-04)

Antonio Margarito KO 2 Hercules Kyvelos

Phoenix, Arizona: Unfortunate Kyvelos was probably the first lion cub in winter that came from icy Montreal to sunny Phoenix and froze. For HBO *Boxing After Dark* viewers it may have seemed a mismatch, but inside the Dodge Theatre, that was just what the 4,200 screaming fans, many of them Mexican, craved.

Undefeated top alphabet contender Kyvelos, now 22-1 (11), proved just how little nice numbers mean against real mitts. To what extent rust may have affected 1996 Olympian Kyvelos, 147, is unclear, but Margarito, 146¾, blasted away any hope of staying with him. Margarito, 30-3 (21), is definitely a growing force, as many fallen foes can testify. In his last fight, also in Phoenix, he stopped Maurice Brantley in two sessions.

The fighters had similar lean physiques and probed with jabs to begin round one. Kyvelos, 28, tried to duck away at weird angles, but Margarito, 26, wound up and zeroed in immediately with looping

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK/HBO

The ref rescues Kyvelos from Margarito

mortars. Kyvelos couldn't respond with anything to keep the champion off, and took too many shots early. Margarito attached his right cross to the point of Kyvelos' chin and speared him with gutshots. Kyvelos' legs were steady, but that was about the best you could say for him in a frame that was easily 10-8 without a knockdown.

Kyvelos started the second with a quick right, his only solid punch of the match. The Mexican was unfazed and jumped back in. Huge whaps dropped Kyvelos almost underneath the ropes and out of the ring. He would have been wiser to keep rolling into the VIP section for a beer. Instead, Kyvelos gamely rose with a silly grin and pretended to be okay. He was obviously not. Margarito slapped him around until referee Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) saved Kyvelos at 54 seconds of the round.

"Of course I'm disappointed," lamented Kyvelos as he promised to return. "Everyone stumbles, they didn't have to stop it." He had a clearer head later and admitted nerves got to him. At least Kyvelos went back to the cold with a nice purse, listed at $225,000. He reportedly collected far more cash than Margarito, who merits a considerable increase in earning power.

"He wasn't at my level, I'm too strong," said Margarito. "I set him up from my first shot. They can watch out for the right, but the left's coming anyway. There's no welterweight that can match me. I'm going up in weight after a big-name fighter. I want [Oscar] De La Hoya, [Shane] Mosley, or [Fernando] Vargas."

Promoter Bob Arum may pitch a summer match with De La Hoya, but it seems unlikely considering Margarito's lack of marquee recognition. But that doesn't mean Margarito won't hit the jackpot someday.

Promoter: Top Rank

(1-31-04)

Phil Woolever

Rafael Marquez KO 2 Pete Frissina

Phoenix, Arizona: Marquez is a hard act to follow. As the opener to Margarito-Kyvelos, Marquez stole the show in many eyes with a performance that made strong claims toward elite pound-for-pound status, even if the opponent wasn't quite a first-rate measuring stick.

It was a fun shootout while it lasted. Marquez, 117¾, Mexico, deserves credit for doing his job and adjusting well to get to his challenger out fast. If the IBF bantamweight title fight (Marquez' second defense) was a mismatch, somebody forgot to tell Frissina, 118, Tarpon Springs, Florida, who was never really in the fight but belonged in the ring despite postfight armchair critics squawking about his debacle. Most bantamweights on the planet would have been shown a similar hasty exit.

Frissina charged out with jabs as Marquez leaned away and fired back slick combinations. It was Marquez' lean strength against Frissina's stocky pressure. Frissina landed with some solid bodywork, but Marquez used his legs for leverage well, and kept Frissina at the end of his stick.

Both men dug well up and down. Frissina stayed busy, but the excess poundage—he weighed 135 on fight night, according to HBO's unofficial scales—slowed him too much. Late in the first round, Marquez found his jaw with a huge four-punch combination, then a wicked, straight right dropped Frissina and ended his chances. He made it up dazed, ate three lefts, and went down sprawling again. For "Sweet Pete" it was sweet dreams, far too soon. He was ready to go, but only a few seconds remained in the session.

"I'm just getting ready to get in a real fight," said Frissina when the doctor checked him between frames.

Frissina, 27-4-1 (15), hoped he had weathered the storm, but his chin had a bull's eye on it. Frissina, 28, resumed his attack, but Marquez, also 28, picked him off with fine jabs and battered him back against the ropes. In a unique twist, referee Raul Caiz Jr. (USA) stopped the contest under almost the same circumstances as his father would in the main event to follow. The official time was 22 seconds of round two.

"He tried to pressure me and I had to stop him," said Marquez, 31-3 (28), soaking a swollen hand. "My first punch wobbled him, so I knew he was going down. I kept my fight plan until the guy came to me wide open. A lot of people don't think I'll knock people out, but I wanted to make a statement. I'm glad people liked what they saw. My hand is hurt just a little bit, but I'll be ready anytime. I'm comfortable at this weight and will be here for a while." At least, speculation goes, until older brother and featherweight titleholder Juan Manuel Marquez moves up.

Promoter: Top Rank

(1-31-04)

Phil Woolever

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK/HBO

Marquez makes quick work of outclassed Frissina

Anthony Mundine KO 5 Yoshinori Nishizawa

Wollongong, Australia: The Samurai spirit promised by Nishizawa, 167¾, Nagano, Japan, was never likely to overcome the twin handicaps in age and class that persuaded many to regard his challenge of Mundine, 168, Sydney, Australia, as a mismatch. But with Oscar winners Russell Crowe and Nicole Kidman sitting ringside, the veteran from the Orient managed to embarrass the defending WBA "regular" super middleweight beltholder (Sven Ottke holds the "super" championship) by knocking him down in the second round before Mundine finished the fight in the fifth. It was more than the crowd of 3,677 inside the Wollongong Entertainment Centre had expected.

The sheepish look on Mundine's face betrayed his own surprise. Nishizawa was 38, carried an undistinguished record into the ring, and was described by Mundine's big rival Down Under, Danny Green, as a man who shouldn't have been able to hurt Mundine. But a solid right hand at the end of the second round by Nishizawa, 24-14-5 (12), put Mundine on the seat of his pants and, despite having landed strong right hands of his own earlier in the round, the local favorite was possibly grateful to hear the bell shortly after referee John Coyle (England) had applied an eight-count.

"I was more off-balance than hurt. I got straight back up and just have to learn from my mistakes," said the 28-year-old Mundine, 20-1 (15). "I have to keep my hands up no matter who I'm fighting."

It was a lesson he should have learned before now. Ottke is less renowned for his knockout power than his capacity to eke out decision victories of the highly dubious variety. But the German managed to inflict the only loss of Mundine's career, by knockout, with a straight right hand in the 10th round of a fight the former Australian rugby league star was winning.

At least he managed to regain control against Nishizawa in round three with quick, strong jabs and solid combinations, and in the fourth, the Japanese challenger's resistance began to ebb under the incessant pressure, a left hook finally sending him to the floor. But the spirit he had spoken of was not completely gone. Bravely, he fought back and made it to the end of the round, and he came out for the fifth determined to go down fighting. He went down early, a hard right hand to the jaw doing the damage, and by the time he had made it back to his feet, Coyle had completed the count of 10. The official time was 43 seconds of round five.

"He's a strong man who could take a punch and he has real heart and courage," said Mundine after his first defense of the relatively meaningless title he won by unanimous decision against Antwun Echols in September '03.

Promoter: Khoder Nasser

(1-19-04)

Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY MARK NOLAN/GETTY IMAGES

Mundine rallies to stop Nishizawa

Masamori Tokuyama W 12 Dimitri Kirilov

Osaka, Japan: In the main event of a doubleheader at Osaka Central Gymnasium featuring two super flyweight title fights, WBC beltholder Tokuyama, 115, Japan via North Korea, retained his title with a unanimous decision over mandatory challenger Kirilov, 114½, Russia. Tokuyama kept jabbing all night and occasionally scored with effective overhand rights, earning scores of 117-111 from Oren Shellenberger (USA), 117-112 from Brad Vocale (Australia), and 116-112 from Porfirio Gomez Rueda (Mexico). The referee was Vic Drakulich (USA).

Tokuyama, making his eighth defense, kept his distance with the jab, and the challenger's caution allowed him to dictate the terms. Tokuyama, 30-2-1 (8), almost toppled the shorter Russian with a vicious right counter in the 11th, but Kirilov, 23-2 (7), withstood the champ's attack. The 25-year-old Russian then showed impressive heart with a surge at the end, shaking up Tokuyama, 29, with desperate combinations that earned him the final session.

Promoter: Kanazawa Promotions

(1-3-04)

Joe Koizumi

Alexander Munoz KO 10 Eiji Kojima

Osaka, Japan: In the co-feature to Tokuyama-Kirilov, Munoz, 114¾, Venezuela, also kept his super flyweight belt, as he overcame a very shaky start to drop taller Japanese southpaw Kojima, 115, in the fifth, ninth, and 10th en route to a TKO win at 3:03 of the 10th round. It was Munoz' third successful defense of the WBA 115-pound title—and his second against Kojima, 27, whom he had kayoed in two rounds In July '02.

The 24-year-old Munoz looked much slower than usual, and was outjabbed by the lefthanded challenger in the first four rounds. Munoz, however, found his range in the fifth and floored his rival with a vicious combo that instantly turned the fight around. The Venezuelan caught Kojima and sent him to the deck again in the ninth, and in the 10th, Munoz, 25-0 (24), decked Kojima, 9-2 (2), with a merciless combination. Moments later, referee Roberto Ramirez (Puerto Rico) called for a well-received stoppage, saving the loser from further punishment.

Through nine rounds, Hector Hernandez (Mexico) had the undefeated puncher up 89-81, Ruben Garcia (USA) saw it 89-80, and Wansoo Yuh (Korea) scored it 87-82.

Promoter: Kanazawa Promotions

(1-3-04)

Joe Koizumi

PHOTO BY THOMAS LOHNES/GETTY IMAGES

Erdei shows off the alphabet belt he won from Gonzalez

Zsolt Erdei W 12 Julio Gonzalez

Karlsruhe, Germany: Just three months earlier, Gonzalez, Huntington Beach, California, via Mexico, had come to Hamburg to end the 48-fight unbeaten run of Dariusz Michalczewski, a man once touted as the only legitimate threat at light heavyweight to Roy Jones and a longtime stablemate of Erdei. The expectation in the Gonzalez camp, understandably, was of another successful raid in German territory. But from the outset, it was clear that the previously untested Hungarian had the Mexican's measure, and the wide decision that went his way before 6,000 fans at the DM-Arena was thoroughly merited.

This was virgin turf for Erdei, despite his home advantage. Never before had he ventured into world class, though his years of experience in the amateurs, where he won the European championships, world championships, and a bronze medal in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, clearly stood him in good stead for his first big test. Prepared for the bout by Fritz Sdunek, the trainer of heavyweight contenders Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko, the 29-year-old Erdei had clearly done his homework. Gonzalez expected Erdei to come to him and was confident that he would get off his trademark hooks to the body and powershots inside. But Erdei revised his strategy and boxed from range, and the result was never in doubt.

"He just boxed better on the night than I did," summed up Gonzalez, 35-2 (22).

Despite a clear advantage in height and reach, the 27-year-old Gonzalez found himself being outboxed, hit almost at will while remaining largely impotent throughout. Erdei, 172, moved from side to side, flicked out punches, and then moved out of range again. His footwork was superb. After three rounds, Gonzalez, 172½, realized he was falling behind and suspected something more: He began to think that he had no means of taming this smaller, faster, cuter foe who stood before him.

"It was a boxing type of fight, and he was just out-speeding me and he out-angled me," Gonzalez reflected. "I felt I hurt him a couple of times, but I couldn't capitalize because he would move out or grab. He was using everything to his advantage and I couldn't deal with it. I tried not attacking him and letting him come toward me, but it didn't work. I'd try feints, but nothing would work. It was just a frustrating night."

But it was an inspired night for the Germany-based Hungarian. His father had passed away three years earlier and he was determined to produce the performance of his life in his memory.

"I'm used to fighting against opponents who are taller than me. I know how to cope with that," Erdei, 19-0 (13), explained. "I had to avoid getting cut early like Dariusz and I knew I'd be quicker and that I'd hurt Gonzalez. But the precision of my punches was most important."

They never stopped being precise all night, and the scores at the end of the 12 rounds reflected Erdei's emphatic superiority. Axel Zielke (Germany) and John Stewart (USA) both scored 118-110, and Manuel Oliver (Spain) 117-111, all for Erdei. THE RING's score read 118-110 for Erdei. The referee was Mark Nelson (USA).

"I expected to win, but I knew it would be hard," said the new Hungarian hero. "Julio is skillful and a great fighter, but I did everything I had to do to realize this goal I had dedicated my entire life towards."

Promoter: Universum-Box Promotions

(1-17-04)

Brian Doogan

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12 Masaki Nakanuma

Yokohama, Japan: Lefty Thailander Pongsaklek, 112, mixed it up with hard punching challenger "Trash" Nakanuma, 112, Japan, and won a close unanimous decision at Pacifico Yokohama to retain the WBC flyweight title for the ninth time. Malcolm Bulner (Australia) scored it 116-112, Jaebong Kim (Korea) had it 116-113, and Chuck Williams (USA) saw the fight 115-113, all for the more skillful titleholder.

Pongsaklek, 26, swapped punches more than expected, but Nakanuma, 28, couldn't make him pay for his risky aggression. Nakanuma, 23-5 (10), fought well, but Pongsaklek, 50-2 (26), was far more precise during the toe-to-toe exchanges in the center of the ring.

Promoter: Kokusai Promotions

(1-3-04)

Joe Koizumi ■

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pongsaklek sneaks a left in between Nakanuma's guard

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

er and close friend. "I was just a little kid, and the coach there told to me to come inside and do anything I wanted. I loved it from the beginning. But I was scared to tell my father that I was boxing. I didn't want to hurt my father's feelings.

"I was a little afraid and I talked to my mother, and she was the one who talked to my father for me. I used my mother to get to my dad. But now, they're both really happy, and they're both true fans."

Vachagan initially wasn't in favor of Archak leaving gymnastics and putting all of his focus into boxing. Like most parents, he didn't want his son's face getting marked up in the ring. But Vachagan's attitude quickly changed once Archak began competing on the amateur level.

"I took my parents to my first fight and I knocked the guy out in 30 seconds," the 25-year-old Ter-Meliksetian said. "I looked over to them and they were crying and cheering at the same time. That convinced them I was serious."

Before he and his family moved to Brazil, Ter-Meliksetian became the 106-pound Russian Junior Olympic champ at 13. He continued boxing in Brazil and eventually pounded out a 107-7 (76) amateur ledger. He smashed through almost everyone he faced, and had his sights set on representing Brazil in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

But there was one major obstacle Ter-Meliksetian could not skirt: He wasn't Brazilian. He wasn't even Russian. He was actually born in Armenia. Without the proper paperwork to box for the Brazilian team, Ter-Meliksetian tried to apply for the Armenian Olympic boxing team. Officials there were more than pleased to take him, but there was one major drawback: Ter-Meliksetian was told by Armenian officials that he'd have to live in Armenia, and he wasn't about to move back.

"I remember as a kid when my father was invited to Brazil, and I didn't want to move to Brazil," said Ter-Meliksetian, who currently resides in Porto Alegre, Brazil. "I was young, I didn't want to leave Russia. I had friends and I had boxing. I didn't think Brazil was that good. Now, I don't want to leave Brazil. I have Armenia and Brazil in my heart, but I think of myself as a little more Brazilian than I do Armenian."

Ter-Meliksetian did accompany the Brazilian national team to Sydney for the Olympics, sparring with team members to keep them sharp. Ter-Meliksetian, however, wouldn't stay long. The frustration of not being able to fight wore on him, and he opted to leave and think seriously about turning pro—rather than wait another four years.

"I love being a pro," said Ter-Meliksetian, who finally made his pro debut in August '02. "I like it more than the amateurs, because I always fought like a professional, I thought. I was frustrated and left Sydney because I felt he should have been competing with the best, and that I was the best.

"I've always been very confident in myself and I have good power. Ever since I was young, my power was there. I think a little of my power came from the training with my father. But I got that power from my grandfather."

Ter-Meliksetian, 7-0 (6), relayed a story of how his grandfather, a Russian World War II vet, knocked out a man bigger, younger, and stronger than he was in a streetfight. "After a while, my grandfather and the guy became good friends, and the guy told my grandfather that he felt like he got hit with a rock the time my grandfather punched him," Ter-Meliksetian said. "That's me. It's like my hands are like two rocks when I punch someone."

Oscar Suarez has worked as Ter-Meliksetian's trainer for six of his seven pro fights. Suarez, who also works with undefeated lightweight contender Acelino Freitas, believes Ter-Meliksetian is more than just a puncher.

Suarez likes Ter-Meliksetian's chin and courageous attitude, which manifested itself during Ter-Meliksetian's tough fight against Bernardo Guereca last May in Las Vegas. Ter-Meliksetian won a six-round decision, the only fight among his first seven that he didn't win by first-round knockout. He also ended up with a broken bone in his right hand.

After surgeons removed a bone from his hip and fused it to the broken bone, Ter-Meliksetian was determined to prove the hand was 100 percent. After a seven-month recuperation period, Ter-Meliksetian returned and scored a first-round knockout of Warren Kronberger in Tucson, Arizona, in December. "My hands are back to being rocks again," the fighter said.

"Archak is world-class material," Suarez said. "Archak has awesome punching power, but he can box. Right now, he's a maturing professional, but he's advancing. If Archak can stay 100 percent focused, he's going to be one of the best quality fighters Main Events has signed in years. There are a lot of things to like about Archak. He has a strong chin and a big heart. It's just a matter of teaching him how to deal with the later rounds. I'm happy with the way he's maturing. He's shown the quality that he could survive and reach a higher level."

Main Events doesn't need to be convinced as to Ter-Meliksetian's potential. Carl Moretti, Main Events' vice president and matchmaker, would just like to see Ter-Meliksetian go deeper into fights.

"What really got me interested in the kid is that he was knocking guys out with both hands," Moretti said. "He literally has one-punch ability with either hand. He had to prove a point with his first fight since the surgery, and he's a freak for his weight, because he is a 6'2" welterweight. He not only has a size advantage, but that's where all the leverage comes from.

"There's no reason for us to move him a little faster than other guys. We'll see what we can do for him. He'll fight on NBC this spring, and based on that, we'll see where to go from there."

Years ago, Ter-Meliksetian liked to keep secrets about his fighting ability. But once he's fought on network television, nothing about that ability will be a secret anymore. ■

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TRINIDAD/CHERIFI or TRIPLE HITTER - Duran/Sims	$25.00
TYSON/BERBICK (LeRoy Neiman)	$150.00
TYSON/BRUNO II or TYSON/MCNEELEY	$20.00 ea.
TYSON/DOUGLAS	$225.00
TYSON/HOLMES or TYSON/BIGGS	$35.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD '91 (Cancelled)	$25.00
TYSON/HOLYFIELD '96 or TYSON/SELDON	$65.00
TYSON/HOLYFIELD II - 5/3/97 (Cancelled)	$5.00
TYSON/HOLYFIELD II	$10.00
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TYSON/TUBBS or TYSON/THOMAS	$150.00 ea.
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MUHAMMAD ALI – Everlast Poster	$15.00

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ALI/COOPER II or ALI/LONDON	$350.00 ea.
ALI/FOREMAN or ALI/BUGNER (Closed Circuits)	$100.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/INOKI (Closed Circuits)	$150.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/MILDENBERGER	$1000.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER II or FRAZIER/FOREMAN	$500.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER III (Closed Circuit)	$100.00
ALI/HOLMES or ALI/NORTON III	$125.00 ea.
ALI/NORTON (warehouse find) Now just	$75.00
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ALI/SPINKS (VG) or ALI/SPINKS II	$250.00 ea.
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BOWE/GOLOTA I or II	$35.00 ea.
CAMACHO/DURAN or CAMACHO/RAMIREZ	$25.00 ea.
CAMACHO/ROSARIO, plus Tyson	$50.00
CARBAJAL/GONZALEZ, Delahoya/J. Mayweather	$50.00
CHAVEZ/CAMACHO or DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD	$40.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/KAMAU or PAZ/LUCAS	$10.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/MAYWHEATHER II or SAAD/BRAXTON	$25.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/TAYLOR or CHAVEZ/RANDALL	$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA PRO DEBUT or FRAZIER/FOREMAN	$500.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II or DELAHOYA/CARR	$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/GATTI or DELAHOYA/CHARPENTIER	$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY or DELAHOYA/TYSON	$45.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY or DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II	$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER or HOLYFIELD/MOORER	$45.00 ea.
DURAN/GONZALEZ '99 or FOREMAN/STEWART	$45.00 ea.
FOREMAN/QAWI or VARGAS/QUARTEY	$35.00 ea.
GATTI/ROBINSON II, VARGAS/CAMPAS	$45.00
HAGLER/HEARNS or HAGLER/ROLDAN	$66.00 ea.
HAGLER/MUGABI or HAGLER/OBEL	$45.00 ea.
HAMED/KELLY or HAMED/BARRERA	$40.00 ea.
HEARNS/BARKLEY I or II	$35.00 ea.
HEARNS/HILL or HEARNS/ROLDAN	$25.00 ea.
HOLMES/MERCER or LEONARD/CAMACHO	$15.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE I, II or III	$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/FOREMAN or HOLYFIELD/LEWIS	$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES or CAMACHO/HAUGEN II	$35.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/LEWIS II or HOLYFIELD/RUIZ II	$25.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/QAWI or PALOMINO/STRACY	$150.00 ea.
ROY JONES PRO DEBUT or SANCHEZ/LOPEZ	$600.00 ea.
JONES/DELVALLE or JONES/JOHNSON	$30.00 ea.
JONES/SOSA or JONES/GRIFFIN	$25.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN	$125.00
LEONARD/DURAN II	$50.00
LEONARD/HEARNS I or II	$65.00 ea.
LEWIS/BRUNO or LEWIS/MCCALL	$45.00 ea.
LEWIS/TUCKER or LEWIS/GOLOTA	$30.00 ea.
LEWIS/TUA or LEWIS/RUDDOCK	$50.00 ea.
LOUIS/NOVA or ROBINSON/DOWNES	$500.00 ea.
MANCINI/CAMACHO or PALOMINO/GREEN	$75.00 ea.
MANCINI/CHACON or MANCINI/ESPANA	$25.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/BURGESE & JONES JR./JOHNSON	$60.00
PAZIENZA/DURAN I or II	$25.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/JONES or PAZIENZA/GRAHAM	$40.00 ea.
SANCHEZ/GOMEZ or ROBINSON/TURPIN	$300.00 ea.
TYSON/FRANCIS or MANCINI/BRAMBLE II	$50.00 ea.
TYSON/BRUNO or TYSON/HOLMES	$100.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD I or II	$20.00 ea.
TYSON/MCNEELEY or TYSON/NORRIS	$15.00 ea.
TYSON/SPINKS or TYSON/NEILSEN	$85.00 ea.
TYSON/SMITH or TYSON/SAVARESE	$45.00 ea.
TYSON/STEWART or TYSON/TILLMAN	$75.00 ea.
TYSON/TUBBS or TYSON/DOUGLAS	$250.00 ea.
TYSON/BIGGS or TYSON/BRUNO II	$80.00 ea.
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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS

(Ratings as of December 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Roy Jones (USA)

1. John Ruiz (USA)
2. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
3. Corrie Sanders (SA)
4. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
5. Hasim Rahman (USA)
6. David Tua (NZ)
7. James Toney (USA)
8. Joe Mesi (USA)
9. Mike Tyson (USA)
10. Nicolay Valuev (RUS)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Evander Holyfield (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)

1. Valery Brudov (RUS)
2. Vacant
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
6. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
7. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
8. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
9. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Luis Pineda (PAN)
12. Kelvin Davis (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Silvio Branco (ITA)

1. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
2. Antonio Tarver (USA)
3. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
4. Bruno Girard (FRA)
5. David Telesco (USA)
6. George Jones (USA)
7. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
8. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
11. Stipe Drews (CRO)
12. Hugo Hernan Garay (ARG)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
Champ: Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)

1. Vacant
2. Manuel Siaca (PR)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Antwun Echols (USA)
7. Byron Mitchell (USA)
8. Brian Magee (GB)
9. Danilo Haussler (GER)
10. Nordin Ben-Salah (NETH)
11. Charles Brewer (USA)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
5. Evans Ashira (DEN)
6. Jermain Taylor (USA)
7. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
8. Howard Eastman (GB)
9. William Joppy (USA)
10. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
11. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
12. Raymond Joval (NETH)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Shane Mosley (USA)
Champ: Travis Simms (USA)

1. Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
2. Fernando Vargas (USA)
3. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
4. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
5. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
6. Alejandro T. Garcia (MEX)
7. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
8. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
9. J.C. Candelo (COL)
10. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
11. Mikael Rask (DEN)
12. Mehrdud Takaloo (GB)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
Champ: Jose Rivera (USA)

1. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. Michael Trabant (GER)
6. Kermit Cintron (PR)
7. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
8. Teddy Reid (USA)
9. Chris Smith (USA)
10. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
11. Hwanyung Park (KOR)
12. Alpaslan Aguzum (TUR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)

1. Miguel Cotto (PR)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
7. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
8. Randall Bailey (USA)
9. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
10. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
11. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)
12. Terrance Cauthen (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant

1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Lakva Sim (MON)
5. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
6. Courtney Burton (USA)
7. Michael Clark (USA)
8. Julio Diaz (MEX)
9. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
10. Steve Johnston (USA)
11. Billy Irwin (CAN)
12. Juan Diaz (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)

1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
3. Randy Suico (PHIL)
4. Janos Nagy (HUN)
5. Michael Gomez (GB)
6. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
7. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
8. Nate Campbell (USA)
9. Mike Anchondo (USA)
10. Diego Corrales (USA)
11. Edwin Valero (VEN)
12. Mzonke Fana (SA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
Champ: Chris John (INDO)

1. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
2. Injin Chi (KOR)
3. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
4. Derrick Gainer (USA)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Victor Polo (COL)
9. Oscar Leon (COL)
10. William Abelyan (ARM)
11. Zahir Raheem (USA)
12. Orlando Salido (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)

1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
4. Tim Austin (USA)
5. Osamu Sato (JAP)
6. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
7. Yober Ortega (VEN)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
12. Shoji Kimura (JAP)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)

1. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
2. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
3. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
4. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
5. Diego Morales (MEX)
6. Leo Gamez (VEN)
7. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
8. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
9. Daniel Ponce DeLeon (MEX)
10. Julio Zarate (MEX)
11. Sornpichai Kratingdaeng (THAI)
12. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)

1. Vacant
2. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
5. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
6. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
9. Martin Castillo (MEX)
10. Ricardo Cordova (PAN)
11. Gabula Vabaza (SA)
12. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Lorenzo Parra (VEN)

1. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Eric Morel (USA)
4. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
5. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
6. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
7. Brian Viloria (USA)
8. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Angel Priolo (COL)
10. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
11. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
12. Damaen Kelly (GB)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)

1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
3. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
4. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
5. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
6. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
7. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
8. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
9. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
10. Fahlan Sakkreerin (THAI)
11. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
12. Yosam Choi (KOR)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS

Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)

1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Jorna Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
4. Eriberto Gijon (PHIL)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
6. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
7. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
8. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
9. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
10. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
11. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
12. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)

WBC RATINGS

(Ratings as of January 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)

1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Corrie Sanders (SA)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Joe Mesi (USA)
5. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
6. Fres Oquendo (USA)
7. Mike Tyson (USA)
8. James Toney (USA)
9. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
10. Lamon Brewster (USA)
11. Jameel McCline (USA)
12. Dominick Guinn (USA)
13. Faruq Saleem (USA)
14. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
15. Hasim Rahman (USA)
16. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
17. Lance Whitaker (USA)
18. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
19. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
20. Oliver McCall (USA)
21. Danny Williams (GB)
22. Jeremy Williams (USA)
23. Evander Holyfield (USA)
24. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
25. Saul Montana (MEX)
26. Samuel Peter (NIG)
27. Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)
28. Peter Okhello (UGA)
29. Friday Ahunanya (NIG)
30. Tomasz Bonin (POL)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)

1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
3. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
4. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
5. Dale Brown (CAN)
6. Rydell Booker (USA)
7. Rudiger May (GER)
8. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
9. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
10. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
11. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
12. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
13. Virgil Hill (USA)
14. Kelvin Davis (USA)
15. Valery Brudov (RUS)
16. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
17. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
18. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
19. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
20. Louis Azille (DR)
21. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
22. Ezra Sellers (USA)
23. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
24. Felix Cora (USA)
25. Mark Hobson (GB)
26. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
27. Michael Simms (USA)
28. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
29. Madjid Zaim (FRA)
30. Cecil McKenzie (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Roy Jones (USA)

1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
3. Stipe Drews (CRO)
4. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
5. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
6. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
7. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
8. Jesus Ruiz (MEX)
9. George Jones (USA)
10. Montell Griffin (USA)
11. Julio Gonzalez (MEX)
12. Eric Harding (USA)
13. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
14. Dan Batchelder (USA)
15. Matthew Barney (GB)
16. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
17. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
18. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
19. Orlando Rivera (PR)
20. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
21. Tony Oakey (GB)
22. Peter Oboh (GB)
23. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
24. Hugo Garay (ARG)
25. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)
26. Derrick Harmon (USA)
27. Richard Hall (JAM)
28. Michael Rush (USA)
29. Manny Siaca (PR)
30. Adrian Diaconu (CAN)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
Interim Champ: Danny Green (AUSTRL)

1. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
2. Eric Lucas (CAN)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
7. Charles Brewer (USA)
8. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
9. Brian Magee (GB)
10. Scott Pemberton (USA)
11. Kabary Salem (EGY)
12. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
13. Antwun Echols (USA)
14. Robin Reid (GB)
15. Andre Thysse (SA)
16. Otis Grant (CAN)
17. Henry Porras (CR)
18. Mario Veit (GER)
19. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
20. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
21. Victor Oganov (RUS)
22. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
23. Willie Stewart (USA)
24. Librado Andrade (USA)
25. Carmine Tufano (USA)
26. Charles Adamu (GHA)
27. Oscar Bravo (USA)
28. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
29. Jackson Chanet (FRA)
30. Mger Mkrtchian (ARM)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
5. Evans Ashira (KEN)
6. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
7. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
8. Eric Mitchell (USA)
9. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
10. Robert Allen (USA)
11. Raymond Joval (HOL)
12. Quentin Smith (USA)
13. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
14. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
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18. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
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20. Wayne Alexander (GB)
21. Yoshinori Araki (JAP)
22. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
23. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
24. Chad Dawson (USA)
25. Leonard Pierre Anastan (HAI)
26. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
27. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
28. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
29. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
30. Anthony Bonsante (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Shane Mosley (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)

1. Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
2. Fernando Vargas (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (USA)
4. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
5. Alex Bunema (USA)
6. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
7. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
8. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
9. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
10. J.C. Candelo (COL)
11. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
12. Raul Marquez (USA)
13. Mehrdud Takaloo (GB)
14. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
15. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
16. Jamie Moore (GB)
17. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
18. Nobuhiro Hishida (JAP)
19. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
20. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
21. Michael Rask (DEN)
22. Rodney Jones (USA)
23. Julio Garcia (CUB)
24. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
25. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
26. Jose Luis Zertuche (MEX)
27. Richard Williams (GB)
28. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)
29. Guillermo Saputo (ARG)
30. Yuri Foreman (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
3. Vernon Forrest (USA)
4. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
7. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
8. Teddy Reid (USA)
9. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)
11. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
12. Ishe Smith (USA)
13. Rafael Pineda (COL)
14. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
15. Michel Trabant (GER)
16. Frederic Klose (FRA)
17. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
18. Christian Bladt (DEN)
19. Jorge Lujan (ARG)
20. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
21. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
22. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
23. Ernesto Carmona (MEX)
24. Kermit Cintron (USA)
25. Michele Orlando (ITA)
26. Randall Bailey (USA)
27. James Hare (GB)
28. Farkhad Bakirov (UZB)
29. Chris Smith (USA)
30. Joshua Clottey (GHA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Emeritus Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)

1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Leonard Dorin (CAN)
5. Paul Spadafora (USA)
6. Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
8. James Leija (USA)
9. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
10. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
11. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
12. Junior Witter (GB)
13. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
14. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
15. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)

16. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
17. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
18. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
19. Michael Stewart (USA)
20. Victor Kpadenue (GHA)
21. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
22. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
23. Juan Carlos Rodriguez (MEX)
24. Carlos Maussa (COL)
25. Eamonn Magee (GB)
26. Andreas Kotelnik (UKR)
27. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
28. Eduardo Gomez (MEX)
29. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
30. Salvatore Battaglia (ITA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
3. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
4. Juan Diaz (MEX)
5. Phillip Ndou (SA)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Julio Diaz (USA)
8. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
9. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
10. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
11. Michael Clark (USA)
12. Jason Cook (GB)
13. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
14. Matt Zegan (POL)
15. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
16. Aldo Rios (ARG)
17. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
18. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
19. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
20. David Burke (GB)
21. Alex Trujillo (PR)
22. Graham Earl (GB)
23. Courtney Burton (USA)
24. Antonio Pitalua (COL)
25. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
26. Billy Irwin (CAN)
27. Lamar Murphy (USA)
28. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
29. Ameth Diaz (PAN)
30. Rolando Reyes (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jesus Chavez (USA)
1. Mzonke Fana (SA)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
4. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
5. Zahir Raheem (USA)
6. Mike Anchondo (USA)
7. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
8. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
9. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
10. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
11. Diego Corrales (USA)
12. Janos Nagy (HUN)
13. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
14. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
15. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
16. Nate Campbell (USA)
17. Orlando Salido (MEX)
18. Justin Juuko (UGA)
19. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
20. Edwin Valero (VEN)
21. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
22. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
23. Steve Luevano (USA)
24. Michael Gomez (GB)
25. Cesar Soriano (MEX)
26. Jose Cotto (PR)
27. Craig Docherty (GB)
28. Alex Arthur (GB)
29. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
30. Bobby Pacquiao (PHIL)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Emeritus Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
4. Rocky Juarez (USA)
5. Humberto Soto (MEX)
6. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
7. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
8. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
9. William Abelyan (USA)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
12. Guty Espadas (MEX)
13. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
14. Luis Fuente (MEX)
15. Osamu Sato (JAP)
16. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
17. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
18. Jorge Solis (MEX)
19. Takalani Ndlovu (SA)
20. Derrick Gainer (USA)
21. Nicky Cook (GB)
22. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
23. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
24. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
25. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
26. Ismael Gonzalez (MEX)
27. Vuyani Bungu (SA)
28. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
29. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
30. Carlos Gamez (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
3. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
4. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
5. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
6. Jose Rojas (VEN)
7. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
8. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
9. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
10. Paulie Ayala (USA)
11. Willie Jorrin (USA)
12. Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)
13. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
14. David Donis (USA)
15. Jorge Linares (VEN)
16. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
17. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
18. Art Simonyan (USA)
19. Seungsok Chae (KOR)
20. Gabula Vabaza (SA)
21. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
22. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
23. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
24. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
25. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
26. Sergio Medina (ARG)
27. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
28. Marcos Licona (MEX)
29. Pedrito Laurente (PHIL)
30. Esham Pickering (GB)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (USA)
4. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
5. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
6. Julio Zarate (MEX)
7. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
8. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
9. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
10. Vusi Malinga (SA)
11. David Guerault (FRA)
12. Noel Wilders (GB)
13. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
14. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
15. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
16. Silence Mabuza (SA)
17. Khulile Makeba (SA)
18. Tim Austin (USA)
19. Moises Castro (NIC)
20. Steve Molitor (CAN)
21. Saenghiran Lookbanyai (THAI)
22. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
23. Pete Frissina (USA)
24. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
25. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
26. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
27. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
28. Akihiko Nago (JAP)
29. Nathan Sting (AUSTRL)
30. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Jose Navarro (USA)
2. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
3. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
4. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Martin Castillo (MEX)
7. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
8. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
11. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
12. Joven Jorda (PHIL)
13. Peter Culshaw (GB)
14. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
15. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
16. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
17. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
18. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
19. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
20. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
21. Jose Beranza (MEX)
22. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
23. Gerson Guerrero (MEX)
24. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
25. Sergio Perez (MEX)
26. Shin Ogata (JAP)
27. Karim Quibir (SPA)
28. Jason Booth (GB)
29. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
30. Neddy Garcia (USA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
6. Jair Jimenez (COL)
7. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
8. Eric Morel (PR)
9. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
10. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
11. Koji Koyama (JAP)
12. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
13. Diosdado Gabi (PHIL)
14. Angel Priolo (COL)
15. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
16. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
17. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
18. Damaen Kelly (GB)
19. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
20. Edgar Sosa (MEX)
21. Raul Eliseo Medina (ARG)
22. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
23. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
24. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
25. Julio Ler (ARG)
26. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
27. Jose Araiza (MEX)
28. Luis Angel Martinez (MEX)
29. Atsushi Mando (JAP)
30. Mercurio Ciaramitaro (ITA)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
3. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
4. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
5. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
6. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
7. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
8. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
9. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
10. Ulises Solis (MEX)
11. Yosam Choi (KOR)
12. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
13. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
14. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
15. Hugo Ramirez (MEX)
16. Omar Nino (MEX)
17. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
18. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
19. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
20. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
21. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
22. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
23. Javier Lagos (MEX)
24. Juan Centeno (NIC)
25. Bert Batawang (PHIL)
26. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
27. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
28. Jose Lopez (PR)
29. Angelo Dottin (PAN)
30. Nobuaki Masuda (JAP)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Eagle Akakura (JAP)
1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
3. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
4. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
5. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
6. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
7. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
8. Juan Palacios (NIC)
9. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
10. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
11. Armand de la Cruz (PHIL)
12. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
13. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
14. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
15. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
16. Omar Soto (MEX)
17. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
18. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
19. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
20. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
21. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
22. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
23. Ricardo San Martin (MEX)
24. Gerardo Verde (MEX)
25. Iwan Key (INDO)
26. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
27. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
28. Nkosinathi Joyi (SA)
29. Shunsuke Nagao (JAP)
30. Valentin Leon (MEX)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of January 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
5. Fres Oquendo (USA)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
8. James Toney (USA)
9. Hasim Rahman (USA)
10. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
11. Juan Carlos Gomez (USA)
12. Mike Tyson (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Kelvin Davis (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
4. Ezra Sellers (USA)
5. O'Neil Bell (USA)
6. Virgil Hill (USA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Alex Petkovic (RUS)
9. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Louis Azille (USA)
12. Ravea Springs (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Antonio Tarver (USA)
5. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
6. Montell Griffin (USA)
7. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
8. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
9. Richard Hall (USA)
10. Dariusz Michalczewski (POL)
11. Stipe Drews (CRO)
12. Tomasz Adamek (POL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Charles Brewer (USA)
5. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
8. Jeff Lacy (USA)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Mario Veit (GER)
11. Byron Mitchell (USA)
12. Antwun Echols (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Raymond Joval (HOL)
3. Evans Ashira (GUY)
4. Bert Schenk (GER)
5. Jermain Taylor (USA)
6. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
7. Angel Hernandez (USA)
8. Derrell Coley (USA)
9. Bea Diallo (LIB)
10. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
11. Howard Eastman (GB)
12. Aaron Mitchell (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Verno Phillips (USA)
4. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
5. Vernon Forrest (USA)
6. J.C. Candelo (USA)
7. Fernando Vargas (USA)
8. Julio Garcia (USA)
9. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
10. Emmett Linton (USA)
11. Alex Bunema (USA)
12. Bronco McKart (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Teddy Reid (USA)
4. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
5. Rafael Pineda (COL)
6. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
7. Kermit Cintron (USA)
8. Jose Celaya (USA)
9. James Hare (ENG)
10. Christian Bladt (DEN)
11. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
12. Joe Hutchinson (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Mike Stewart (USA)
4. Omar Weis (ARG)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Miguel Cotto (USA)
7. James Leija (USA)
8. Ricky Hatton (ENG)
9. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
10. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
11. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
12. Paul Spadafora (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Javier Jauregui (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Levander Johnson (USA)
5. Courtney Burton (USA)
6. Julio Diaz (USA)
7. Michael Clark (USA)
8. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
9. Angel Manfredy (USA)
10. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
11. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
12. Steve Johnston (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)
1. Joel Casamayor (USA)
2. Nate Campbell (USA)
3. Steve Forbes
4. Diego Corrales (USA)
5. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
6. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
7. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
8. David Santos (USA)
9. Phillip Ndou (SA)
10. Janos Nagy (HUN)
11. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
12. Edelmiro Martinez (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Orlando Salido (MEX)
4. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
5. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
6. William Abelyan (USA)
7. Zahir Raheem (USA)
8. Rocky Juarez (USA)
9. In Jin Chi (KOR)
10. Victor Polo (COL)
11. Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym (THAI)
12. Humberto Soto (MEX)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
2. Vacant
3. Paulie Ayala (USA)
4. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
5. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
7. David Donis (USA)
8. Art Simonyan (USA)
9. Diego Morales (MEX)
10. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
11. Fernando Velardez (USA)
12. Walter Estrada (COL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)
1. Pete Frissina (USA)
2. Tim Austin (USA)
3. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
4. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
5. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Jorge Lacierva (USA)
8. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
9. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
10. Mauricio Pastrana (PAN)
11. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
12. Roger Gonzalez (USA)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Martin Castillo (MEX)
5. Jose Navarro (USA)
6. Felix Machado (VEN)
7. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
8. Jason Booth (ENG)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Julio Zarate (MEX)
11. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
12. Oscar Andrade (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Jair Jimenez (COL)
4. Damaen Kelly (GB)
5. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
6. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
7. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
8. Eric Morel (PR)
9. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
10. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
11. Angel Priolo (COL)
12. Hawk Makepula (SA)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
6. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
7. Yosam Choi (KOR)
8. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
9. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
10. Roberto Vasquez (PAN)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Daniel Reyes (COL)
1. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
2. Vacant
3. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
4. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
5. Pichit Siriwat (THAI)
6. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
7. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
8. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
9. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
10. Juan Palacios (NIC)
11. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
12. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, January 1983

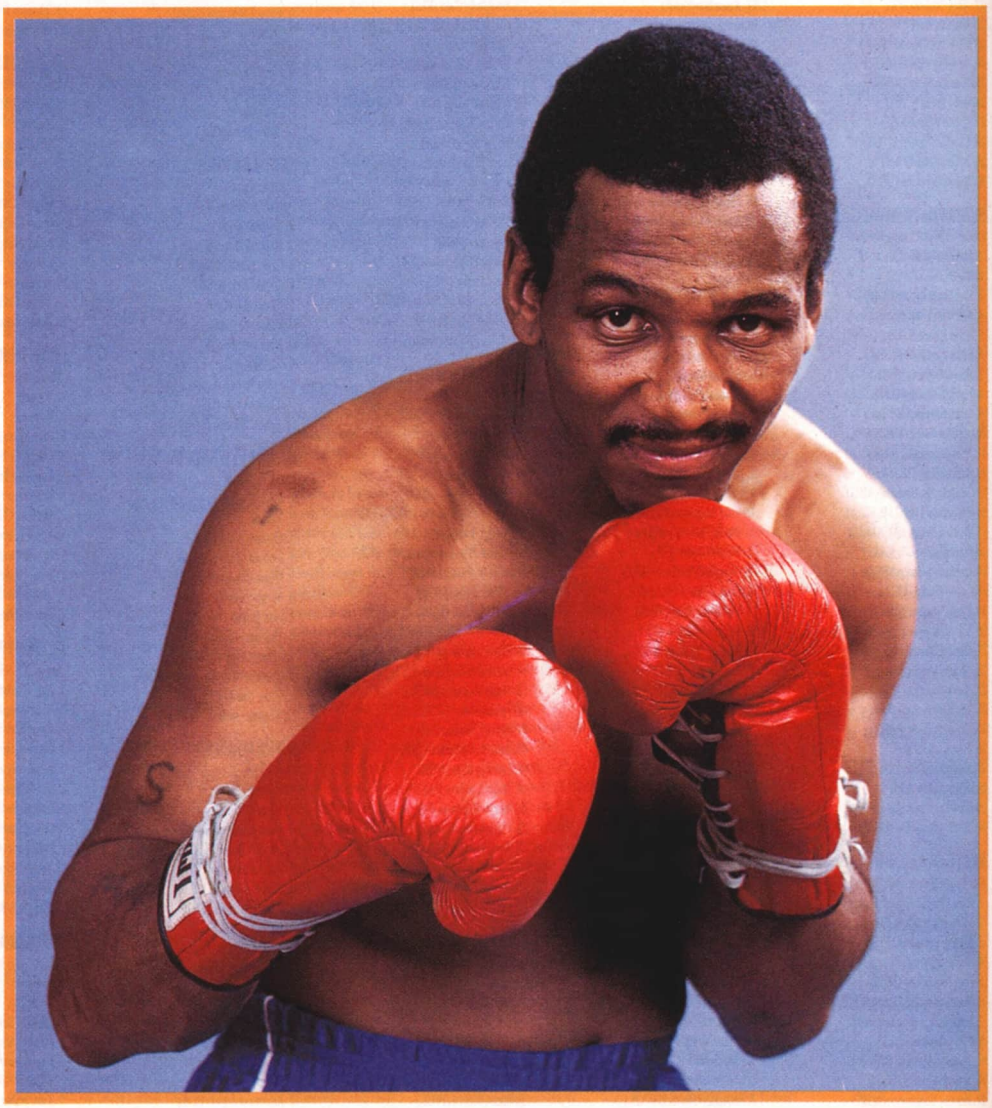
FRANK "ANIMAL" FLETCHER

On The Prowl For A Perch Atop The Middleweight Division

By Nigel Collins

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

Imagine some television network having its own private Doctor Frankenstein hidden in the basement of its Broadcast Row skyscraper. Further fantasize that our mad scientist has been charged with the task of piecing together a perfect fighter for the network's weekly bloodlettings. In all likelihood, the deranged doc would come up with someone (or something) that resembled Frank "The Animal" Fletcher. And who could ask for more? The left-handed middleweight attacks like a killer robot, routinely survives brushes with disaster, bleeds all over the place, and always—at least, thus far—comes back to grind his opponent into the canvas.



"There's no way to put on a bad fight with Frank Fletcher," says NBC-TV's own fight doctor, Ferdie Pacheco, who has purchased all of Fletcher's network TV fights. "You are absolutely guaranteed that you're going to have non-stop action. He embodies exactly what you want to see in a television fight: action, incredible bravery, and the ability to bounce back from injury and adversity. He simply makes for great television."

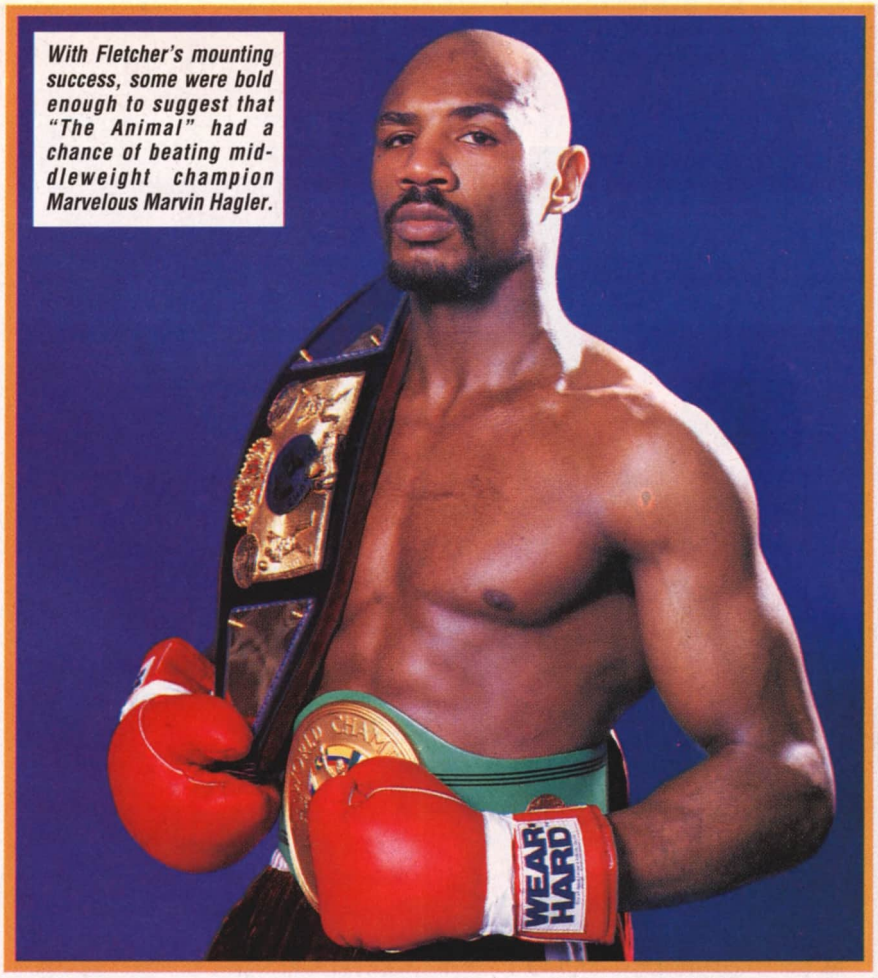
But The Animal is no laboratory monster. As it turns out, he's all too human. Fletcher is a living, fire-breathing creation of one of boxing's most fertile breeding grounds—Philly's teeming black ghetto.

It's not an unfamiliar story, just an especially graphic example. The animal in Fletcher isn't, and never has been, confined strictly to the ring. The very same devil that serves him so well in a brawl has also been the monkey on his back for as long as anyone can remember. But for now, at least, the rage within him has been channeled in a positive direction.

On a recent autumnal afternoon, The Animal strolled into Marty Feldman's gym resplendent in a gray-on-gray ensemble that was color-coordinated from the top of his velour homburg to the tip of his designer shoes. It hasn't always been this way, of course, but Frank can afford all the trappings of success now, even the $21,000 Lincoln Towncar parked outside. He's on a roll, the hottest middleweight contender out there, pulling down six-figure purses for the same sort of mayhem that used to get him locked up.

"In the ring, it's a fight. Whether a man beats me or not, we can still be friends," says Fletcher when asked about his ferocity. "I don't have a grudge against nobody in the ring. Out of the ring, I'm just a nice guy. Anything I've got, I'll give to people. But if people try to take advantage of me, then that's a different story. Before I became who I am, I'd just haul off and sock 'em. But now, I just can't do that anymore."

But before you walk away believing that this man is known as "Animal" for the same reason the Brothers Grimm called their little characters "Happy," "Sleepy," and "Bashful," let's take a look at the man himself. A hard look. This dude is for real, a bonafide bruiser with more entries on the police blotter than in *The Ring Record Book*.



With Fletcher's mounting success, some were bold enough to suggest that "The Animal" had a chance of beating middleweight champion Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

There are those so bold as to suggest that Fletcher might have a legitimate chance of (dare we say it?) beating Marvelous Marvin Hagler. Foremost among the believers is Frank's mother. Most fighters' moms want their boys to win, of course, but the flamboyant Lucille Fletcher is in a class by herself. She has become almost as much of a media star as her son. As his most ardent, not to mention noisy supporter, this animated lady is inevitably photographed by the ringside TV cameras as she cheers her offspring on to victory, usually in the most rambunctious manner imaginable.

"I know a lot of women who say they just turn on the TV to see Frankie fight so they can see me freaking out," smiles Lucille.

Obviously, much of his mother's pugnacity rubbed off on Frank.

"I always liked to fight when I was a small boy. I could always take care of myself," remembers Frank.

"Frankie's been rough all his life. He never backed off anybody. He's got a lot of heart. Always did," agrees Lucille. "I've seen him tear a pair of steel-toed brogan shoes up in a week. You couldn't send Frankie out in his Easter clothes, he'd come back looking like a ragamuffin."

Unfortunately, clothes were not the only things Frank abused. He was only eight when first arrested, and rapidly escalated from there into a full-time thug during his teens and early-20s.

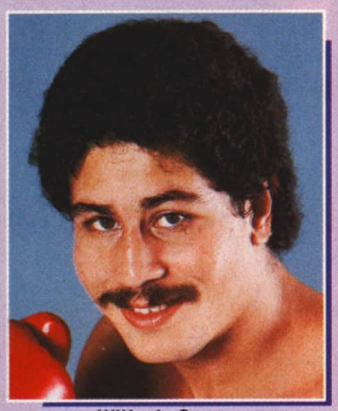
"For 15 to 20 years, I was in and out of jail," says Fletcher. "Jail was my second home. There was nothing to do. I didn't like working for nobody. I didn't want to get a job. I was stealing, taking things, but there was no guns or nothing. At the time, I thought that was the happenings, you know. Why do most people stay in trouble? Because they like it [giggles]."

Where, one may wonder, was Frank's father during these troubled years?

"They're not together. My father used to be a fighter, too. The first fight he lost was with my mother," chuckled Frank. "A long time ago, a lady he used to go with tried to poison him or something like that. He went through seizures and almost died. His mind comes and goes now."

If The Animal inherited his brawling nature from his mother, his father seems to

THE RING RATINGS, January 1983



Wilfredo Gomez

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA
1. **Michael Dokes,** Akron, OH
2. **Mike Weaver,** Los Angeles, CA
3. **Gerrie Coetzee,** South Africa
4. **Renaldo Snipes,** Yonkers, NY
5. **Trevor Berbick,** Canada
6. **Greg Page,** Louisville, KY
7. **Gerry Cooney,** Huntington, NY
8. **Pinklon Thomas,** Philadelphia, PA
9. **Randall (Tex) Cobb,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **Tim Witherspoon,** Philadelphia, PA

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Dwight Braxton, Camden, NJ
1. **Michael Spinks,** St. Louis, MO
2. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad,** Brooklyn, NY
3. **Matthew Saad Muhammad,** Philadelphia, PA
4. **Eddie Davis,** Freeport, NY
5. **Jerry Celestine,** New Orleans, LA
6. **John Davis,** Hempstead, NY
7. **Carlos DeLeon,** Puerto Rico
8. **Marvin Johnson,** Indianapolis, IN
9. **Willie Edwards,** Detroit, MI
10. **James Scott,** Rahway, NJ

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Frank Fletcher,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Tony Sibson,** England
3. **Mustafa Hamsho,** Syria
4. **Dwight Davison,** Detroit, MI
5. **Thomas Hearns,** Detroit, MI
6. **Wilford Scypion,** Port Arthur, TX
7. **Fulgencio Obelmejias,** Venezuela
8. **James Shuler,** Philadelphia, PA
9. **James Green,** Irvington, NJ
10. **Bobby Czyz,** Wanaque, NJ

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Wilfred Benitez,** Puerto Rico
2. **Thomas Hearns,** Detroit, MI
3. **Tony Ayala Jr.,** San Antonio, TX
4. **Davey Moore,** New York, NY
5. **Carlos Herrera,** Argentina
6. **Mike McCallum,** New York, NY
7. **Gary Guiden,** Muncie, IN
8. **Clint Jackson,** Nashville, TN
9. **James Green,** Irvington, NJ
10. **Ayub Kalule,** Uganda

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Milton McCrory,** Detroit, MI
2. **Donald Curry,** Fort Worth, TX
3. **Roger Stafford,** Philadelphia, PA
4. **Marlon Starling,** Hartford, CT
5. **Pipino Cuevas,** Mexico
6. **Kevin Howard,** Philadelphia, PA
7. **Colin Jones,** England
8. **Bobby Joe Young,** Steubenville, OH
9. **Mauricio Bravo,** Venezuela
10. **Elio Diaz,** Venezuela

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Aaron Pryor, Cincinnati, OH
1. **Leroy Haley,** Las Vegas, NV
2. **Saoul Mamby,** New York, NY
3. **Johnny Bumphus,** Clementon, NJ
4. **Steve Hearon,** Houston, TX
5. **Ronnie Shields,** Port Arthur, TX
6. **Sang-Hyun Kim,** Korea
7. **Guillermo Fernandez,** Venezuela
8. **Ubaldo Sacco,** Argentina
9. **Billy Costello,** Kingston, NY
10. **Willie Rodriguez,** Allentown, PA

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alexis Arguello, Nicaragua
1. **Aaron Pryor,** Cincinnati, OH
2. **Ray Mancini,** Youngstown, OH
3. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
4. **Howard Davis Jr.,** Glen Cove, NY
5. **Andy Ganigan,** Honolulu, HI
6. **Gonzalo Montellano,** Bakersfield, CA
7. **Greg Coverson,** Kalamazoo, MI
8. **Roberto Elizondo,** Corpus Christi, TX
9. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas, NV
10. **Livingstone Bramble,** Passaic, NJ

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Samuel Serrano, Puerto Rico
1. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards,** England
2. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
3. **Rafael (Bazooka) Limon,** Mexico
4. **Hector Camacho,** New York, NY
5. **Rolando Navarrete,** Honolulu, HI
6. **Bobby Chacon,** Pacoima, CA
7. **Johnny De La Rosa,** Miami, FL
8. **Jorge Alvarado,** Panama
9. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas, NV
10. **Chung Il-Choi,** Korea

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eusebio Pedroza, Panama
1. **Juan LaPorte,** New York, NY
2. **Wilfredo Gomez,** Puerto Rico
3. **Rocky Lockridge,** Paterson, NJ
4. **Ruben Castillo,** Bakersfield, CA

have left him a legacy of woman troubles, despite Frank's protests to the contrary.

"I know how to run women. At least, I think I know how to run 'em. Maybe in the past, some young lady that I might mess with thinks she's too slick for me. But she just don't know. Before, a long time ago, I might have busted her in the face."

It was one such incident that put Frank back behind bars for a particularly lengthy spell.

"Some young lady said I jumped on her—or something like that. Me and her used to go together before I was a fighter. I did two years in Camp Hill and then I got out. I had to stay out of jail. I had three kids and I didn't want no other man taking care of my kids. A long time ago, my mother came to visit me in jail and said: 'All your brothers, they're boxing.' So, when I came out in 1975, I took it up."

"All the guy needed was a little help, that's all," says Marty Feldman, who, along with the Reverend Elvin Thompson, trains and co-manages Fletcher. Feldman, a former pro middleweight, should know. He claims to have been in a few "minor" scrapes with the law himself.

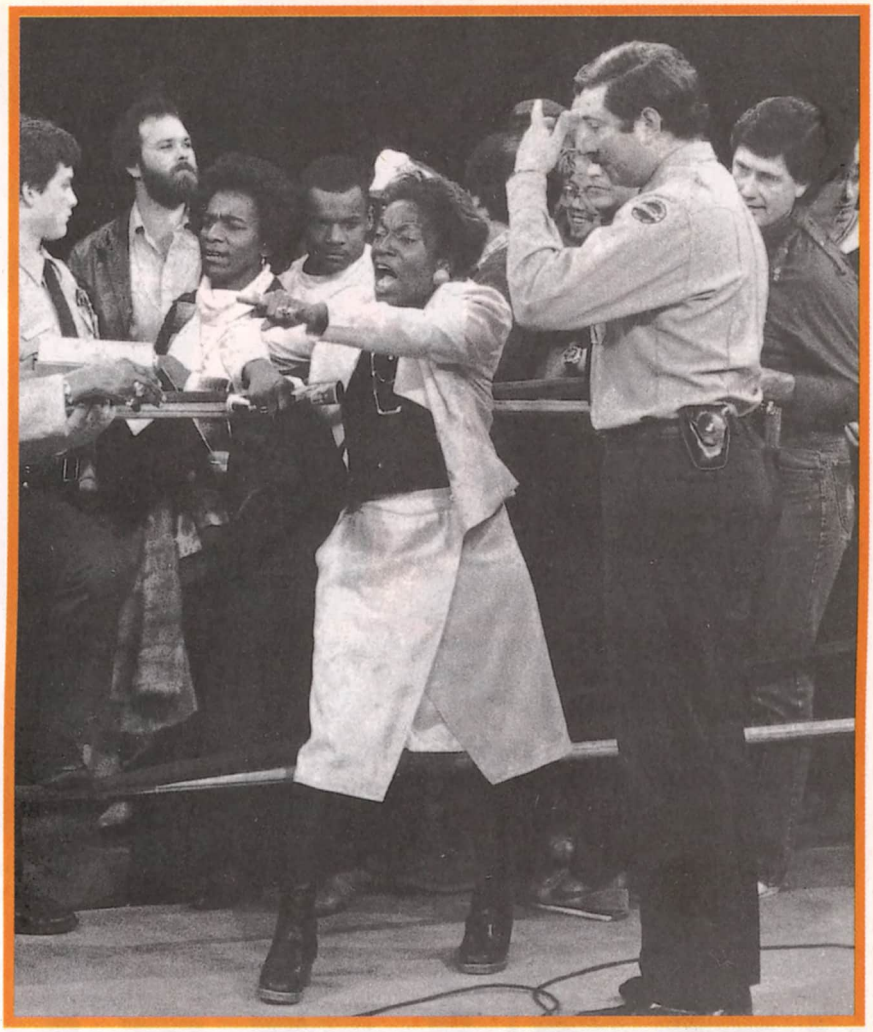
"Fifteen years ago, I fought 40 cops on 39th Street," says Feldman, still a powerful looking man despite recent hip surgery. "Seven of them made it to the hospital with casts."

5. **Jose Caba,** Dominican Republic
6. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana
7. **Mario Miranda,** Colombia
8. **Pat Cowdell,** England
9. **Marcos Villasana,** Mexico
10. **Jackie Beard,** Detroit, MI

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
1. **Leo Cruz,** Dominican Republic
2. **Jaime Garza,** Los Angeles, CA
3. **Sergio Palma,** Argentina
4. **Mike Ayala,** New York, NY
5. **Lupe Pintor,** Mexico
6. **Ricardo Cardona,** Colombia
7. **Felipe Orozco,** Colombia
8. **Roberto Rubaldino,** Mexico
9. **Juan (Kid) Meza,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Soon-Hyun Chung,** Korea

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jeff Chandler, Philadelphia, PA
1. **Lupe Pintor,** Mexico
2. **Chul-Ho Kim,** Korea
3. **Albert Davila,** Los Angeles, CA
4. **Oscar Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA
5. **Edgar Roman,** Venezuela
6. **Jiro Watanabe,** Japan
7. **Freddie Jackson,** Houston, TX
8. **Gaby Canizales,** Laredo, TX
9. **Eijiro Murata,** Japan
10. **Kiko Bejines,** Mexico

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eleoncio Mercedes, Dominican Republic
1. **Santos Laciar,** Argentina
2. **Freddie Castillo,** Mexico
3. **Prudencio Cardona,** Colombia
4. **Hilario Zapata,** Panama
5. **Katsuo Tokashiki,** Japan
6. **Tadashi Tomori,** Japan
7. **German Torres,** Mexico
8. **Antonio Avelar,** Mexico
9. **Hwan Jin Kim,** Korea
10. **Jung-Koo Chang,** Korea



Among Fletcher's most ardent followers was his mother, Lucille, a fiery woman who made herself known during The Animal's fights. This sort of animated postfight outburst was typical for Lucille.

There was no instant success for Fletcher, no high-powered business syndicate to back his career. The last thing anyone would consider The Animal to be would be another Sugar Ray Leonard. In fact, he wasn't even known as "The Animal" at first. He turned pro in Allentown under the name of Monty "Honeyboy" Montez, scoring a four-round decision over Charles Stern. That was in October of 1976, and in the next three years he only managed to obtain six more bouts, compiling a less-than-awesome 4-2-1 record. Frank was a mere $200 preliminary fighter, nothing more.

"I wasn't really serious about boxing at the time. Who can get serious if you're only gonna fight once or twice a year?"

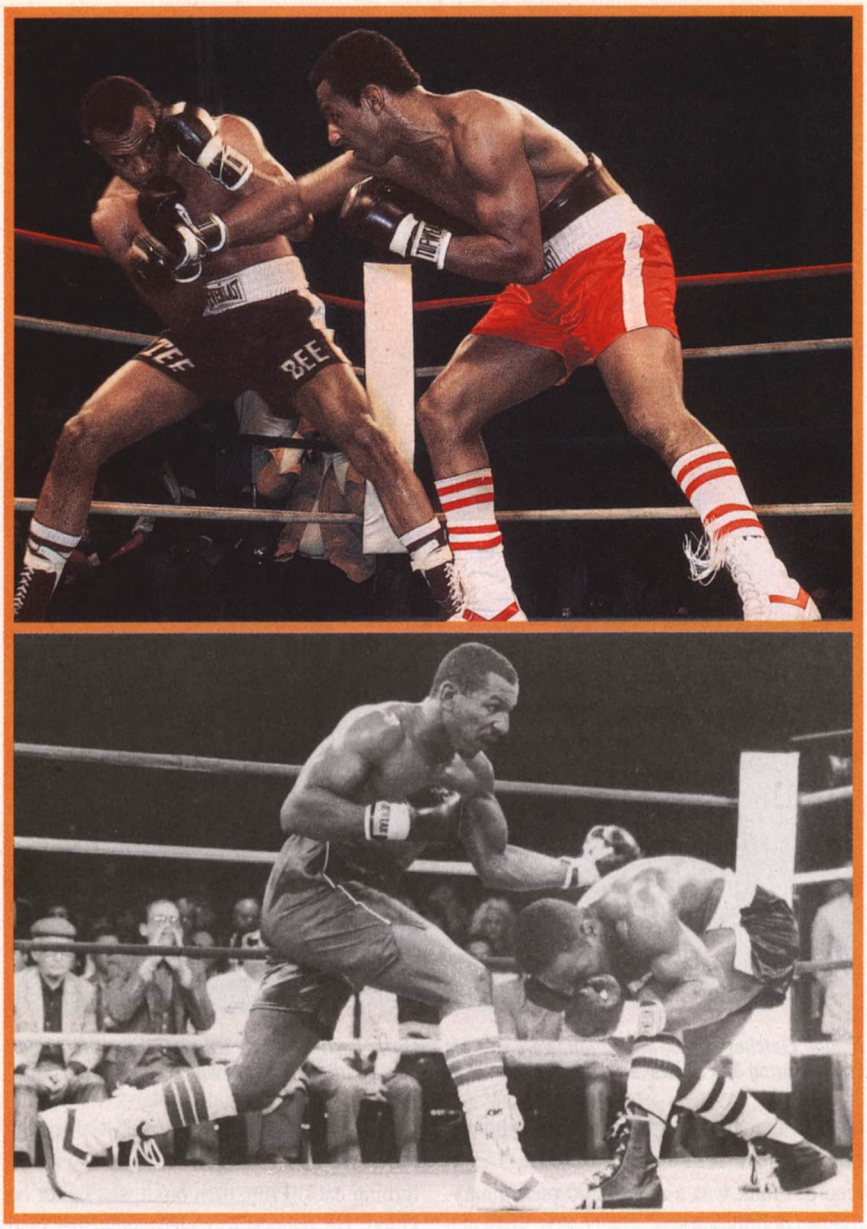
Then came the ESPN tournament and the break Fletcher was waiting for. Even then, he sneaked in the back door when one of the original tourney seeds dropped out. Frank outpointed iron-chinned Ben Serrano in the opening eliminations, and then proceeded to cream Jerome "Silky" Jackson (KO 5), William "Caveman" Lee (KO 4), and Randy McGrady (KO 7) to capture the TV title. He was finally on his way to somewhere besides the slammer.

The savage knockout of Jackson also brought him more—it earned him the Animal nickname. The favored Silky took 10 stitches in his lower lip after Fletcher chewed him up and spit out the pieces. Fletcher's uncompromising, let-it-all-hang-out-style had emerged and there was no turning back. From then on, it was kill or be killed. He seemed to have caught the Saad Muhammad Syndrome, and fans and matchmakers alike ate it up.

The Animal's reputation took on added credibility when he destroyed kayo artist Sammy NeSmith (still a ranked fighter at the time) in six blood-splattered rounds. It marked the first of three times that he was the winning participant in THE RING's "Fight of the Month."

Following record-padding wins over Robert Davis (KO 3) and Sugar Ray Phillips (KO 2), Fletcher won the vacant USBA middleweight crown in a thrilling 10-round war with Norberto Sabater in June of 1981. Sabater has never been the same since, but The Animal has gone on to defend the belt four times—each one of them remarkable in its own right.

None of his challengers have been the



Fletcher's record wasn't built through setups. He faced some of the toughest middleweights of the time, taking a 12-round decision against Tony Braxton (top) in February '82, and scoring a sixth-round kayo over James Green (above) eight months later.

kind to roll over and play dead. In each defense, Fletcher was bashed and gashed before prevailing in the finest tradition of the game's legendary sluggers. Ernie Singletary (KO 8), James Green (KO 6), Clint Jackson (W 12), and Tony Braxton (W 12) all tried to keep up with The Animal's frantic pace. All failed. In the end, it's been Fletcher's unflagging courage and intense desire to win that has overcome his often more skillful adversaries.

"I'm not a dirty fighter. I don't like fighting dirty," says Frank. "That's why when I fight a guy, I don't tie him up. I hear my corner hollering, 'Tie him up, hold on,' but I come to fight. I don't come to do no ballet, no dancing. Let's get it over with. We're here to fight. You come to beat me. I come to beat you. May the best man win."

It is a philosophy that has endeared The Animal to the fans, but has also led to the ugly and perplexing problem of frequent eye damage. It has become an issue of increasing worry as Fletcher, currently THE RING's number-one ranked contender, inches closer and closer to a shot at Hagler.

"He just makes every fight tough," says Fletcher's promoter, J Russell Peltz. "There's no such thing as an easy fight for Frank. My opinion is that he can't afford any warmup fights with his style. It just doesn't pay. Anybody can poke him in the eye and open a cut. It could happen in a little $5,000 fight as easily as a big one."

Naturally, television packager Pacheco, whose objective it is to fill TV dates with attractive fights, sees things from a different perspective.

"Peltz is a natural pessimist. He keeps looking for this guy to fall apart, but he hasn't. He's getting stronger and stronger, more confident and more confident. Stick a pin in any of the top 20 middleweights, and I'll make a fight with Fletcher. He can't afford to get stale."

Not all of the marks on The Animal's rather lived-in face come from the ring. His front teeth were dislodged in a jailhouse fracas with Bobby Drewrey, another incarcerated boxer.

"He didn't knock them out. He knocked them loose with a right-left," explains Fletcher, re-fighting the battle with his hands as speaks. "I said, 'Hold it,' and pulled them out, threw them down and said, 'Now we're gonna fight.' Then I started dogging him."

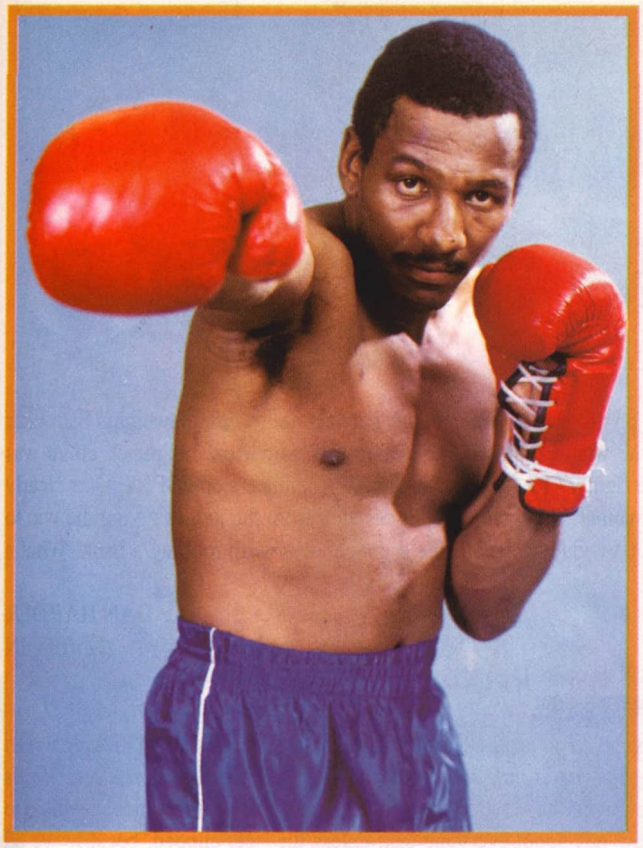
The vivid scar that runs across his nose is a souvenir picked up on the streets.

"A left hook and a right razor," quips Feldman, adding to the bad-ass image both fighter and manager cultivate.

With all of his bravado, Fletcher is a happy-go-lucky, free spirit, who seldom hesitates to reveal his inner feelings with surprising candor.

"Like most people I never really had any idea that I would be who I am today. I knew it wasn't meant for me to be dead. It wasn't meant for me to kill anybody and go to jail for the rest of my life. It wasn't only because I didn't want it that way. It's because God didn't want it that way. Because I am who I am, I give thanks to Marty Feldman, Reverend Elvin Thompson, and my uncle, Dick Turner. Otherwise, if it was left up to me, I'd probably be back in jail."

If he's not careful, that's just where he might end up. It seems that trouble courts The Animal the way his face invites punches. He simply refuses to back down. Two days after we talked, Fletcher was arrested by the Philadelphia police for disorderly conduct. It seems that he was having a verbal dispute with an old acquaintance outside a barroom when the police intervened. One thing led to another, and before you could say "controversial decision," The Animal was back in the clink.



Fletcher and his supporters were hoping The Animal would get a chance to lay his potent punch on Hagler before his outside-the-ring troubles or his tendency to cut in the ring got the better of him.

"My daughter's mother just happens to be a young lady that keeps writing nasty things on my windows," protests Fletcher. "I'm not the kind of guy that goes looking for a person. I just say, 'Well, when I see her, then we'll talk about it.' That night, I went up Chester Avenue and accidentally saw her. If she had stood still, I wouldn't have run after her. I wasn't harassing her or nothing like that. All of a sudden, two cops come from nowhere. The black cop pushed me into the white cop and he tried to break my arm by bending it behind me. And that's when the black cop threw my other arm on top of the car and put the handcuffs on. That's when we got to cursing."

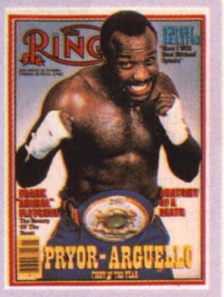
Fortunately for all involved, "cursing" was as far as it went this time. Neither party perpetrated any physical damage. All in a night's work for the Philly police. And it seems, only a triviality as far as Fletcher and his camp are concerned.

"It's all bull," insists Feldman. "They harassed the guy. The kid don't bother anybody. How [bleeping] serious can it be?"

"What it's really all about is that I won't let them talk to me any old way," says Fletcher. "I give them respect because they're police officers. All Philadelphia police are not bad. Some just ride up on me for my autograph. But I won't let anybody, not a police officer or anybody, talk to me any old way."

Which just proves that in or out of the ring, you can't take the animal out of Frank Fletcher. The beast is always there, lurking just beneath the surface of his affable facade, ready to explode at the slightest provocation. Conventional wisdom says that Hagler should be the man to tame him, but don't be so sure. 1983 just might be "The Year Of The Animal." ■

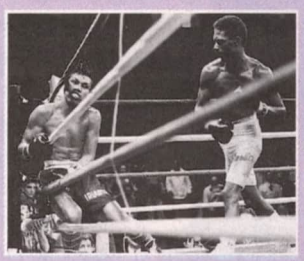
THE RING, January 1983



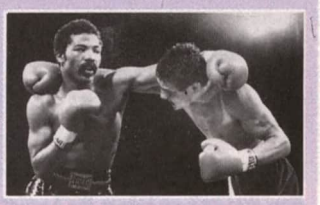
***The Cover*:** On the eve of his light heavyweight unification battle with Michael Spinks, Dwight Muhammad Qawi vowed to hand Spinks his first loss, and wrote an article for THE RING explaining how his bob-and-weave, non-stop style would cause Spinks to wilt. Spinks countered with an article of his own in the same issue, saying that he was too fast to be trapped by Qawi and would emerge as the undisputed 175-pound champ.

***Anatomy Of A Ring Death*:** The tragic demise of Duk-Koo Kim, who died after suffering a 14th-round knockout at the hands of Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, was examined. The nationally televised fight and its aftermath led many in the mainstream media to call for the abolishment of boxing. Writer Jack Newfield placed most of the blame on the sanctioning bodies and promoters who approved the fight.

***Lights Out For Arguello*:** Alexis Arguello went for one title too many, falling in his legendary battle with WBA junior welterweight king Aaron Pryor. The Nicaraguan was attempting to win a title in his fourth division, but Pryor thwarted Arguello's bid in a stunning back-and-forth tilt that was finally decided when Arguello went down and out in round 14.



***Not Chandler's First Choice*:** World bantamweight champ Jeff Chandler wasn't that enthused about fighting Miguel Iriarte, but it was a mandatory title defense the WBA had forced Chandler to take. It took the out-of-condition Chandler nine rounds before finally finishing Iriarte. The victory, however, set up a possible title defense against Gaby Canizales.



***Fighter Of The Month*:** Pryor received the honors for his 14-round dismantling of Arguello. "The Hawk" prevailed in large part because of his seemingly limitless reservoir of energy. Pryor absorbed Arguello's best shots and kept coming, finally ending one of the best fights of the 1980s with a barrage of 23 unanswered punches.

Come Out Writing

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

GARR GRIPE

I just watched an excellent bout on the *Friday Night Fights* between junior middleweights Sam Garr and Matt Vanda. Garr dominated the whole fight, and according to CompuBox, his punch count was almost double Vanda's. I scored the fight 97-93 for Garr, as did the announcers on ESPN2. Garr clearly won the bout and did it in a classy manner. Then came a split decision from the judges giving the win to Vanda. At the end, both hugged, but Vanda looked as if he'd gotten away with robbing a bank. What a shame for Garr—and the sport.

DAN HARDER
Griffith, IN

RESPECTING MIKE

I find it amazing that everyone wants to go head-to-head with Mike Tyson. Talk about kicking a man while he's down. What's most outrageous is that two former middleweights, Roy Jones and James Toney, are calling him out. How the mighty have fallen. Remember when it was almost inconceivable to think of anyone beating Tyson? Now just about everyone can, unless they get clipped, because we all know Mike still possesses the most dangerous hands in boxing. I guess I wish these cats who will never contribute to the sport as much as Tyson has would have a little more respect. Hasn't he been exploited enough?

JOHNATHAN LEE IVERSON
New York, NY

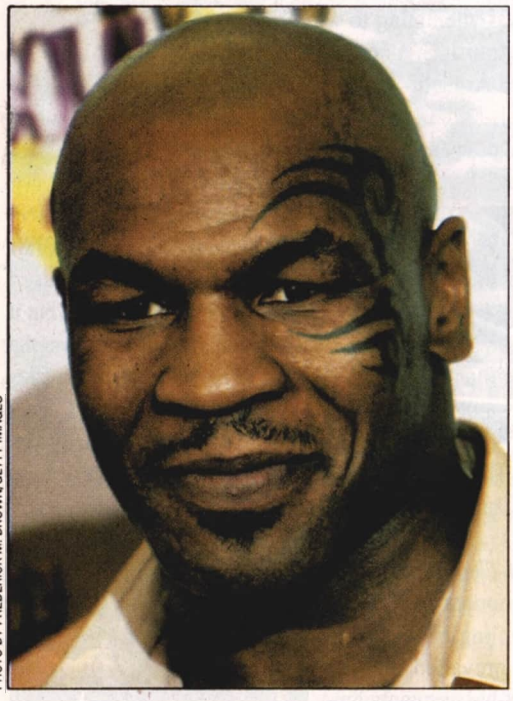


PHOTO BY FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

Now that he's no longer the baddest man on the planet, it seems like everybody wants a piece of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson, including former middleweights Roy Jones and James Toney. This bothers reader Johnathan Lee Iverson, who thinks Tyson deserves more respect in his declining years.

RYAN'S WRONG

Jeff Ryan makes it clear in the April 2004 issue of THE RING ("Does That Finally Clear Things Up?") that he does not believe Arturo Gatti is worthy of being a Hall of Famer. I disagree. Ryan states that Gatti has had to be carefully matched throughout his career. While that may have been true at one time—what fighter today isn't protected on the way up?—Oscar De La Hoya clearly wasn't an example of being carefully matched. I don't think Micky Ward was a safe match either. And the kind of interest that Gatti and Ward generated in the mainstream media, with their three fights, was a much-needed boost to the public image of boxing.

If any fighter deserves the honor of being inducted for his contributions to the sport of boxing, it's Gatti. As Ryan wrote, "He's a television legend, a walking highlight film, and one of those rare athletes who'll guarantee that you underpaid for your ticket, no matter what it cost."

BRIAN WAGNER
Green Brook, NJ

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUNDS

It seems to me that both boxing writers and fans are overlooking an important factor that greatly contributes to the constant scoring controversy following the scoring of title fights. Disputed decisions are nothing new, but the problem has been much more prevalent since the 1980s when the ruling bodies went to the 12-round limit. Prior to then, the "championship rounds" were numbers 13 through 15, and many great bouts were decided in those rounds. While meant to prevent injuries and fatalities, the main legacy of 12-round championship fights has been one inconclusive result after another. In my mind, returning to the 15-round distance for title fights

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Whether or not Arturo Gatti deserves to be in the Hall of Fame after his career is over is currently a topic of much debate. RING columnist Jeff Ryan votes no, while reader Brian Wagner says yes. The final decision won't come until five years after Gatti's last fight.

would definitely improve the chances of more clear-cut outcomes and would be fairer to both the public and the boxers themselves.

JEFFRY COLLINS
Montreal, Quebec

ROCKY REASONING

I recently read your "All-Time Dream Matchups" issue of THE RING ANNUAL featuring "The 50 Greatest Fights You Never Saw!" Although I enjoyed it immensely, I disagree with the outcome you predicted for the Rocky Marciano-Joe Frazier fight. To say that Frazier's size and strength would enable him to punish Marciano seems, to me, very unlikely.

Marciano outslugged and out-muscled the then-undefeated Carmine Vingo, who outweighed him by 45 pounds. Although Rocky's nose was badly cut in his second bout with Ezzard Charles, it is unlikely that Frazier, whose arsenal consisted mainly of hooks, would cut Marciano's nose to an appreciable extent, if at all. The outcome I envision would have been Marciano via kayo in the second, based on the fact that Frazier had the tendency to be shaken in the early rounds, as he was by Bob Foster and George Foreman, coupled with the fact that Marciano had more than twice as many first-round knockouts as Frazier. What were you guys thinking?

CHRIS PETRILL
East Northport, NY

[Editor's note: While your opinion about the fantasy match between Frazier and Marciano is as good as anybody else's, a few of your facts are incorrect: Vingo weighed 189, compared to Marciano's 180¼ for their December 30, 1949, bout. Moreover, Vingo was 16-1 (7) going into the Marciano fight, not undefeated.]

EVEN STEVEN

I don't understand why many people think that scoring rounds even is a sin. There are several cases when a round can be scored 10-10. When both fighters are landing effective punches in a close round, why not give each one 10 points? How does one determine the winner in a "feeling out" round in which very few, if any, clean punches connect? Also, there are rounds when both fighters are clinching excessively and barely throwing any punches.

I think if judges scored more even rounds instead of trying to pick a winner in a round where neither fighter is superior, there would be less controversial decisions.

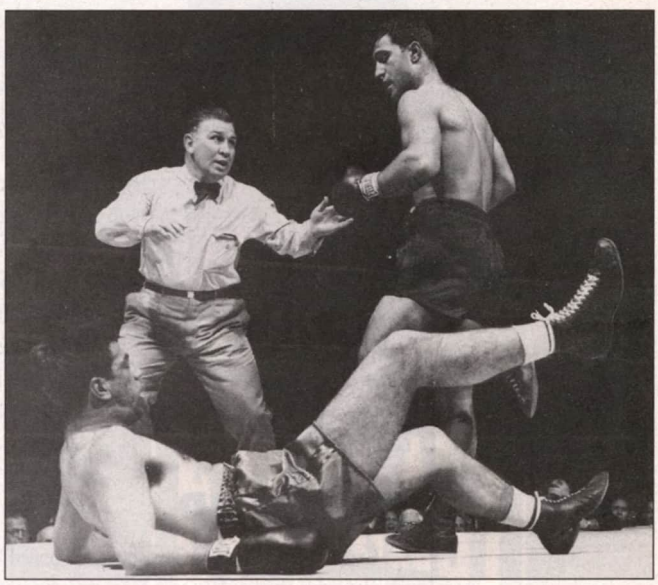
JUSTIN HOPEY
Madbury, NH

LIMBLESS AND BLINDFOLDED

While I am in agreement with most of your opinions on the state of boxing and its competitors, I have to speak up and strongly disagree on the scenarios depicted in "Mayweather vs. The All-Time Greats" (April 2004) and "Tszyu vs. The All-Time Greats" (June 2003). What gives you the impression that these pound-for-pound greats would not be able to beat the champs of yesterday?

Today's athletes are better trained in the arts of defense, conditioning, and nutrition. Weight training, commonly shunned until the 1980s, would give today's best a huge strength and psychological advantage over any athlete from boxing's golden era. You should rename those articles, "Mayweather On His Worst Night With A Blindfold vs. The All-Time Greats" and "Limbless Kostya Tszyu vs. The All-Time Greats." Then I could see where you're coming from.

AARON RAMSON
Indio, CA ■



Former heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano, pictured stopping Carmine Vingo in the sixth round, lost to Joe Frazier in THE RING ANNUAL's "All-Time Dream Matchups." Reader Chris Petrill disagrees, believing that "The Rock" would kayo "Smokin' Joe" in two rounds.

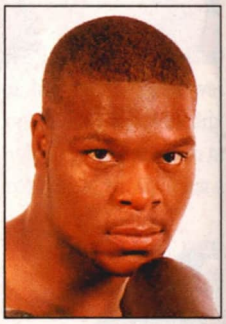
LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

SPRING LIKE A BEE

Okay, so it was a winter of discontent for boxing fans. Even though a few stars came out to play—we got **Arturo Gatti** in January, **Erik Morales** in February, and **Shane Mosley** in March—for the most part, injuries decimated the schedule, making it a lean season.

But the good news is, the sport is ready to bloom again in the spring. Once the vernal equinox hits and the days start getting longer than the nights, those nights will start getting very interesting for fight fans. Nothing on the boxing calendar is certain until the bell rings (as we were reminded this past winter), but if the schedule holds up, we'll be looking at four RING championship fights this spring, plus the re-emergence from hibernation of boxing's two biggest ticket sellers.

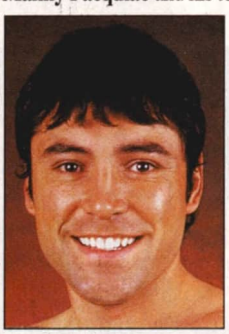


Spinks: Can he jinx Judah?

The first biggie is on HBO on April 10, as the world welterweight title is at stake in a pick-'em type fight between two of the quickest draws in the sport, champion **Cory Spinks** and challenger **Zab Judah**. In the Mandalay Bay co-feature, **Wladimir Klitschko's** comeback continues against **Lamon Brewster**—not exactly another pick-'em, but a decent gauge of how the younger Klitschko is progressing.

The Klitschko we really care about right now, however, is big brother **Vitali**, and the fight we care about more than any other this spring is his battle with the man who kayoed his brother, **Corrie Sanders**. Klitschko-Sanders, which is expected to come off on April 24, will fill the most important title in all of sports, the vacant heavyweight championship of the world. And, for those who keep track of triviality, it will be the first world heavyweight title fight between two white guys since **Rocky Marciano-Don Cockell** in 1955.

While one RING championship gets filled, another will become vacant shortly thereafter, as lightweight king **Floyd Mayweather** is expected to move up in weight on May 8, most likely taking on **Paul Spadafora** at 140 pounds at Madison Square Garden. But we won't have to wait long to get back into the RING championship swing: The following Saturday, May 15, is the probable date for the light heavyweight title rematch on HBO Pay-Per-View between champ **Roy Jones** and challenger **Antonio Tarver**, and one week after that, on May 22, HBO gives us a magnificent showdown between world featherweight champion **Manny Pacquiao** and his top contender, **Juan Manuel Marquez**.



De La Hoya: Golden return June 5

And if all that wasn't enough, boxing's most reliable superstar, **Oscar De La Hoya**, will return from his debatable defeat against Mosley with a pay-per-view fight on June 5. The opponent was undecided as of press time—the leading candidate appeared to be **Daniel Santos**—but does the opponent really even matter when "The Golden Boy" is in action? De La Hoya vs. a 77-year-old **Carmen Basilio** would probably score a half-million PPV buys.

Then there's boxing most unreliable superstar: **Mike Tyson**. The always fascinating former heavyweight champ was contemplating a June 5 return himself on Showtime, but, in the ultimate compliment to De La Hoya, has decided he'd rather not go head-to-head with Oscar. So instead, we may see "Iron Mike" even sooner, perhaps sometime in May, as he launches his umpteenth comeback.

Throw in five Saturday afternoon shows on NBC between April 17 and May 15, the possible return of **Marco Antonio Barrera** on Telefutura on April 30, and maybe another **Don King** marathon PPV in April featuring **Ricardo Mayorga**, **Chris Byrd**, and nearly everybody else in the DKP stable, and we're looking at a spring with some serious sting.

Let's just cross our fingers and hope everybody's Achilles tendons, shoulders, pecs, abs, and glutes can go un-ruptured for the next few months.

LISTEN UP

Expect one winter '04 fight that was spoiled by injury, **Francisco Bojado** vs. **Jesse James Leija**, to be rescheduled for sometime later this year on HBO ... **Miguel Cotto** is penciled in for the co-feature slot on the May 8 Mayweather show, with opponents under consideration including the dangerous **Gianluca Branco** and the even more dangerous **Vivian Harris** ... We probably won't get to see it here in America, but British fans can mark down April 10 at the MEN Arena in Manchester for the rematch of one of 2003's finest fights, **In Jin Chi** vs. **Michael Brodie**. ■

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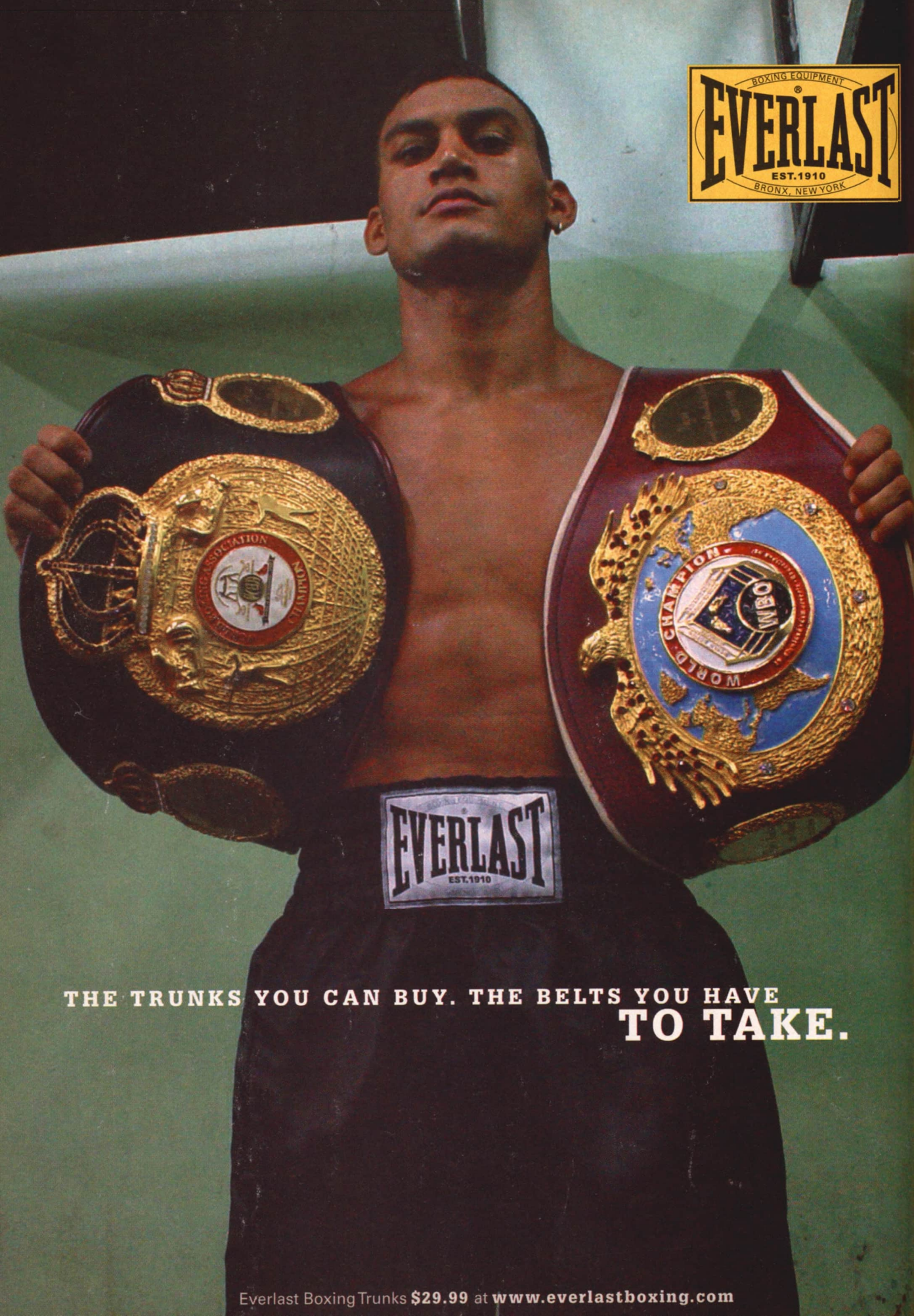
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